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By Stuart Sutherland

THOMAS SZASZ:Sex: Facts, Frauds and Follies
194pp. Oxford: Blackwell. £3.50.
0 631 2737 2

Nobody is born a gourmet - a taste for fine food is learnt not innate. The pleasures of sex are equally determined by learning. Why is it, then, that doctors have taken it upon themselves to provide advice and training to people dissatisfied with their sexual performance, whereas no self-respecting gastroenterologist would offer to teach someone dissatisfied with fish and chips how to prepare and savour a *terroir de foie gras à la façon périgourdine*? Thomas Szasz's answer to this question is that medical men are avid for power and money, and that they acquire both by labelling certain conditions as diseases and then claiming that only they have the expertise to effect cures. He argues that, except in rare cases where there is some physiological dysfunction, such conditions as premature ejaculation, impotence and frigidity should not be the concern of doctors, who should confine themselves to the treatment of venereal disease, which they may know something about.

Whether or not one agrees with his views, Szasz has always been an excellent pamphleteer with a gift for irony and invective. These virtues are displayed in his latest attack on the medical profession, *Sex: Facts, Frauds and Follies*. He notes, for example, that whereas in the nineteenth century masturbation was often regarded as a disease severe enough to warrant surgery as a cure, current medical fashion is to regard self-abuse as self-therapy. Another pleasing irony is that the American Inland Revenue Service has apparently recognized that where recourse to a prostitute is prescribed by a doctor for the release of sexual tension the expenses incurred are tax-deductible. It is perhaps worth noting parenthetically that the spread of jaeuzils in the United States has been facilitated by that far-sighted organization's recognition that they too are tax-deductible if medically prescribed for the relief of back pain.

Unfortunately, Szasz's virtues as a writer are offset by one serious defect. He comes to a conclusion too quickly and having reached it continues for too long his attempt to thrust it home, using arguments and examples which become increasingly limp and repetitious. The first half of his latest book is accordingly a good deal more interesting than the second.

One of his techniques for denigrating the medical profession is to delineate some flagrant examples of malpractice or stupidity and leave it to the reader to assume that they characterize the whole profession. In his onslaught on sexual therapy, his principal targets are its main initiators and publicists, Masters and Johnson: they are not difficult to ridicule.

Szasz notes that their exegesis of their work contains numerous inconsistencies, contradictions and evasions. For example, they originally provided single men who came for "treatment" with surrogates, some of whom were prostitutes. They defend this practice by claiming that there was "an obvious clinical (sic) demand for a female partner" and describe the partner's role as that of "someone . . . to give to and to get from during the sexually dysfunctional male's two weeks in the acute phase of therapy". They never acknowledge that the real role of the partner is to have sexual intercourse with the patient, possibly in order to teach him how to go about it and to give him some confidence in his own abilities. Moreover, their implicit and illogical assumption that the single male needs a therapeutic partner whilst the single female does not surely merits the attention of the Women's Liberation Movement. In fact, they abandoned the practice of providing female partners when the husband of one surrogate sued them for alienation of affection and they had to make a large settlement out of court.

Masters and Johnson argue that in treating a couple for sexual problems it is necessary to use both a male and a female therapist, since the sexual experiences of one sex can only be understood by a member of that sex, but they do not scruple to treat homosexuals whose feelings, on the same argument, could surely only be understood by a homosexual therapist.

They claim that masturbation is good in its own right, arguing that it leaves "the penis unencumbered by female containment", and hence can provide the most ecstatic form of orgasm. They have even invented a new disease called "masturbatory orgasmic inadequacy" which they believe afflicts women "who regularly obtain orgasms through coitus but not through masturbation". Yet elsewhere they seek to defend masturbation because it leads to more pleasure in intercourse. As Szasz rightly points out, the decision whether and under what circumstances to masturbate is a private concern and to defend the habit on therapeutic grounds is to accept the old-fashioned sexual morality that Masters and Johnson are trying to combat. Similarly, they argue, fallaciously, that their "discovery" that the orgasmic experience of heterosexuals and homosexuals is indistinguishable will make homosexuality more acceptable to the general public.

In his zeal to discredit Masters and Johnson, Szasz does not hesitate to attack their prose style, and it is worth quoting in full one of his more miserably pieces of invective on this theme. Masters and Johnson write:

It should be emphasized that the Foundation's basic premise of therapy insists that, although both husband and wife in a sexually dysfunctional marriage are to be treated, the marital relationship is considered as the patient.

Szasz comments:

This piece of pseudo-English gives us a glimpse of the real ugliness - at once linguistic and spiritual - of Masters and Johnson's work. Here is a sentence that carefully eliminates persons from both sides of the therapeutic relationship. Indeed, the therapist is not even the Foundation but the "basic premise". "The basic premise" we are told, "insists". On what? On claiming that neither husband nor wife is the patient, but that the marital relationship is. That simply cannot be so. When people consult Masters and Johnson, they usually pay for the service they receive. When a check is made out for the payment, it is written and signed by a person (or persons), not by a "marital relationship".

Although Szasz establishes that

Masters and Johnson are muddled, sanctimonious chumps who have deliberately tried to bring the treatment of those dissatisfied with their sex lives into the sphere of medicine, he himself fails to ask, let alone to answer, the important questions about sex therapy, which are: Does it work? Should it be offered to the public by specialists in the subject? Who should those specialists be? Although I accept Szasz's claim that most sexual problems do not have organic causes, I shall continue to use the terms "treatment" and "therapy" since there are no other words in the language that denote the attempt by specialists to help people with problems of living.

Research was not Masters and Johnson's forte. It could be argued that they learnt nothing that was not already known from the 10,000 orgasms they studied "under laboratory conditions". Moreover, their research into the effectiveness of their techniques was unsystematic and poorly controlled, and they failed to follow up their patients for a long enough period. According to Szasz, they admitted that their success rate with male impotence in single men fell from about 75 per cent to 25 per cent when they ceased to use surrogates. More careful research, undertaken mainly in Britain and other European countries, suggests that, like other forms of psychotherapy, sex therapy does have a modest success, at least with some people. It is rarely completely effective, since few patients suffering from premature ejaculation, impotence or frigidity achieve completely normal functioning after therapy, but appreciable help is afforded in some somewhere between 25 per cent and 75 per cent of cases, depending on the condition treated and the criteria used. Almost all of Masters and Johnson's patients were comparatively well-to-do - had they not been they could not have afforded the costs of treatment; other investigators have found that the middle classes respond better to sex therapy than do the working classes.

Given that sexual treatment can benefit at least some people who are dissatisfied with their sex lives, one can ask whether within our culture there should be a professional group providing this service. It is off very well for Szasz to point out that people may learn about sex from parents, friends, lovers, and prostitutes, but the fact that many people are either anxious about their sexual activities or dissatisfied with them suggests that these sources of coaching are insufficient. Moreover, although the techniques of sex therapy - which Szasz does not deign to describe - are not particularly elaborate or recherché, they have to be learned before they can be practised. One example of a specialized technique is the treatment of premature ejaculation by teaching the female partner to squeeze the base of the penis glands when an ejaculation is imminent. Another method is known as sensate focusing, and is employed both in the treatment of impotence and of frigidity. The couple are taught to give each other pleasure by massage and by manipulating each other's erotic zones, without attempting to proceed to intercourse. Much sexual therapy consists merely of an attempt to reduce anxiety, for which psychologists have developed specialized techniques in other contexts.

Several objections to sexual therapy can be raised, and indeed are raised by Szasz. First, systematic sexual coaching could be regarded as dehumanizing sexual activity. As Szasz puts it: "The current promasturbatory literature reflects the premise that the female genital is a kind of household appliance whose owner does not understand the instruction manual". In raising this objection, Szasz himself appears to be falling into the same prisonness of which he accuses Masters and Johnson. There is no reason why people should not, if they so wish, take a purely animal pleasure in sexual activity without the accompaniment of love, provided they do not in so doing harm another person. Nor does it follow that a person who has systematically been instructed both in how to take sexual pleasure and in how to give it will treat his or her partner with any less respect, love and consideration.

The second issue is more complex. It is difficult, if not impossible, for any therapist to give sexual coaching without imposing his own values on the client. Some people enjoy fellatio and cunnilingus, others revel in bondage or flagellation. The extent

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to which such matters are a personal taste is revealed in Alex Comfort's book of sexual recipes, *The Joy of Sex*, in which he disarmingly instructs his readers on how to avoid strangulation when tying one another up, but completely neglects to give any advice on whipping. Some sex therapists are undoubtedly so carried away by their own enthusiasms that they try to convert their patients. In view of Szasz's scorn for the efficacy of sex therapy, it is surprising that he thinks they might succeed. Provided sex therapy is between consenting adults, there is no reason why the client should be persuaded to undertake any practices that he or she finds morally or aesthetically repugnant. Of course the sex therapist should respect his clients' own judgments on how to conduct their sex lives, but the clients can surely be left to evaluate any advice he gives for themselves.

A third danger in sex therapy is that it may encourage people to have unrealistic aspirations and to expect that they will day by day reach the heights of sexual bliss. To implant any such expectation is bad therapy. But the fact that sex therapy is better done by some than others is no reason for not doing it at all.

Despite his criticisms, Szasz grudgingly admits that sex therapy may sometimes do some good: he would do nothing either to promote it or to bar it. He is apparently against sex therapists, but not sex therapy.

Granted that there is both a use and a demand for sex therapy, one can ask why should give it. In denouncing the wicked doctors for arrogating this responsibility to themselves, Szasz is a little ingenuous. Long before Masters and Johnson had been heard of, every general practitioner was confronted daily with men and women who wanted help with their sexual difficulties. Presumably, they brought these problems to doctors because there was nobody else to whom they could go, and they felt they could rely on doctors to be discreet. All Masters and Johnson did was to specialize in an existing trend and to attempt to devise more systematic methods of providing help. Moreover, it is in the nature of a doctor's job that he should do many things, like comforting the sick and dying, that do not depend on a knowledge of pathology. In fact, many doctors doubtless find the demand for advice on sex a nuisance or an embarrassment. Although doctors will probably never be able to avoid giving some advice on sexual matters, it should not be primarily their responsibility, though for reasons other than those put forward by Szasz. It is simply a waste of a lengthy and expensive training for doctors to devote themselves to sex therapy. The job can be done just as well and much more cheaply by others, such as clinical psychologists and social workers, provided they have sufficient wisdom and have been trained in the necessary techniques.

Szasz argues that there should be no government-sponsored programmes of sex therapy since everyone "should be free to choose the source of their sexual enlightenment and 'training'". Because of his extreme right-wing views, he is reluctant to see the state interfere in any aspect of life, and he would deprive the poor of any form of psychiatric help, let alone help with their sexual problems. As it happens, adults are currently free to seek both forms of help wherever they choose, but unless some central control is exercised over sex therapy, the very abuses of which Szasz complains will persist. For example, he protests that many male sex therapists have intercourse with their female patients. Indeed, a recent survey showed that in the United States more than one clinical psychologist in twenty had had intercourse with a patient, and the proportion of sexual therapists indulging in this practice might be expected to be very much higher. Szasz rightly condemns as hypocrisy the claim that such intercourse is performed for therapeutic reasons, yet unless some governmental licensing system is adopted, it would be impossible to stamp out this form of abuse, just as the best way to control the spread of venereal disease through prostitution is to license prostitutes. Whether or not assistance with sexual problems should be provided, as it currently is

in Britain, at the taxpayers' expense must depend on the availability of resources and an evaluation of its benefits as compared with those it has obtained from devoting more funds to housing, education, public transport and so on.

Szasz is perhaps on firmer ground in condemning sex education in schools, since it is almost impossible to provide sexual education without influencing in one way or another the morality of the young, who are less able than adults to judge for themselves the advice offered by those in authority. There is, however, no justification for Szasz's claim that sex education has directly increased the number of illegitimate pregnancies in teenage girls.

There is one aspect of sexual treatment that can be dealt with only by doctors, and that is sexual surgery. It is common knowledge that some surgeons are prepared to enlarge women's breasts by implanting silicone, just as others are prepared to rectify by artificial the shape of an ugly nose provided by nature. It is less well known that several forms of prosthesis are now available to in-

crease the rigidity of the penis. One technique is to insert a pair of silicone rods into its spongy tissues. Since this operation leaves the penis permanently erect, its results must be extremely uncomfortable and one can only marvel that surgeons offering it receive any custom. Perhaps a less satisfactory technique is to implant two expandable elastic cylinders in the penis, which can then be erected by pumping fluid into them from a container concealed behind the wall of the abdomen. Surgeons claim that the recipients of these devices are delighted with them, but it is safest to suspend judgment until an independent study is undertaken. Such a study is available of the results of trans-sexual surgery — operations undertaken in order to convert the male sex organs as far as possible into those of a woman or vice versa. The results showed that there was no objective improvement in the patients' lives, and on this basis Josiah Hopkins Medical School, which was a pioneer in developing the operation, has ceased to offer it.

In his usual incoherent manner, Szasz vilifies the surgeons who conduct "sexual-surgical mayhem", whilst at the same time maintaining that the state should not interfere with such operations. If they want them, using his technique of dismissing by association, he compares sexual surgery with operations such as castration, previously performed as "cure" for masturbation. But one could with equal validity compare some sex operations to cosmetic surgery, which has brought many patients considerable benefit. The moral issue of how far in what circumstances to protect people from themselves is not an easy one.

Despite his constant recourse to the tricks of the pamphleteer — and in particular his attempt to foist on a profession as a whole the idiocies of some of its members, some of Szasz's arguments are undoubtedly valid. He is, for example, correct in observing that to argue that because masturbation is natural it is good is as fallacious as to argue that because heeling is natural it is good: one cannot derive an "ought" from an "is". He is also right to warn of the danger of accepting a morality imposed by experts under the guise of therapy: people should not be de-

ceived into thinking that cellists are bad for their health.

But he is too carried away by the force of his own rhetoric. He claims that the fact that sex has to be learned does not mean that it must be taught, and he seems to think that it is so personal a matter that it cannot be taught. But there are aspects of sex that have to be learned from others, and Szasz does not say whether it is really better to learn about them in the bawdy atmosphere that prevails in most groups of young men, who often conceal their own uncertainties by a show of sexual bravado, than to learn from older and possibly wiser heads. Szasz loudly proclaims that people should take their own decisions about how to conduct their sex lives, but he ignores the fact that those decisions are not taken in a vacuum — they are influenced by parents, friends and lovers, and doubtless by the mass media. Indeed, Szasz only proposes problems, he never concerns himself with solutions. He is a satirist, not a thinker, and it would be a pity if readers were misled by his slow learning into taking him too seriously.

He is also right to warn of the danger of accepting a morality imposed by experts under the guise of therapy: people should not be de-

ceived into thinking that cellists are bad for their health.

He is also right to warn of the danger of accepting a morality imposed by experts under the guise of therapy: people should not be de-

Extraverted, introverted and controverted

By J. K. Wing

H. B. GIBSON:

Hans Eysenck

The Man and His Work

275pp. Peter Owen. £11.95.

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they might find some of the anecdotes trivial and the speculations about motivation unilluminating.

The core of the book is a rather brief chapter on Eysenck's contribution to personality theory. This deserves attention because an appreciation of the principles and methods involved is necessary for an understanding of points of issue in the more public controversies. From Aristotle, Hippocrates and Galen onwards, there have been systematic attempts to describe and classify human personality. The four ancient classifications of temperament — sanguine, phlegmatic, choleric and melancholic — still survive, in much diminished form, as popular psychological types. Several descriptive systems have recently been developed, based on the statistical analysis of self-descriptions given by large samples of people. One of the best known is that of Cattell, which provides a profile of sixteen scales, thus preserving some of the variety of human personality but making it difficult to formulate and test explanatory theories.

Eysenck and his colleagues at the Institute, using a different type of statistical analysis, postulated that each individual's personality could usefully and economically be measured according to three largely innate dimensions which they called "extraversion-introversion", "neuroticism-stability" and "psychoticism". From the first two can be derived a typology — stable extravert, stable introvert, neurotic extravert, neurotic introvert — with some resemblance to the four classical temperaments, and to the personality types described by other workers.

More important, however, was the search for correlations between position on these dimensions and other psychological and physiological characteristics. It was thought, for example, following Pavlov and Clark Hull, that introverts would acquire conditioned responses more rapidly and strongly than extraverts and that this tendency would be related to a lower level of "reactive inhibition" in the nervous system (later reformulated in terms of level of "arousal"). Neuroticism, on the other hand, was not related to conditionability, but was explained in terms of "drive" — namely, intensity of activity of the autonomic nervous system. The nature of psychoticism and its place in the system remain unclear.

These ideas generated an enormous body of research, partly because of the theoretical interest of linking personality factors to nervous-system mechanisms, partly because of their practical implications. It is the latter type of study that has awakened public interest in the work. For example, it can be argued that criminal behaviour is partly caused by a failure to learn, during childhood, socially approved habits of behaviour. If extraverts are less likely to acquire such habits, while people high on neuroticism have

greater "drive" than average, neurotic extraverts are likely to be unduly represented among a population of people who have committed crimes. Such a tendency will be, at least in part, genetic in origin. This one set of predictions alone has led to a substantial scientific literature involving both laboratory and population studies, and to much professional argument. Gibson does not attempt to deal with this work in any detail but quotes a recent reviewer's conclusion that the empirical evidence is ambiguous. The work has not led to useful practical applications.

Another kind of application is clinical, but here too the contribution of personality theory to diagnostic nosology has been little clarified, although some simple relationships (for example, that many people with depression and anxiety disorders are high on neuroticism before and between episodes) are well established. So far as treatment is concerned, Gibson concentrates on behaviour therapy. The experts, including those at the Institute, agree that personality dimensions are, as yet, of little help in predicting type of treatment or individual response. Eysenck, himself no therapist, has contributed mainly through his encouragement of colleagues within the department and his successful advocacy outside.

For general readers, Eysenck's reputation is likely to be judged on what they have heard of the public controversies in which he has been involved — his devastating criticism of Freudian and other systems of psychoanalysis, his flirtation with astrology and parapsychology, his views on the relationship between cigarette-smoking and disease, and above all his conclusions about the distribution of intelligence in various ethnic groups. Gibson discusses each of these topics, but without going into them in any depth, so that the reader will be hard put to it to draw conclusions, particularly about the last two. He himself regards the advocacy of measures aimed at reducing cigarette-smoking as "paternalistic" and he does not review the debate on Eysenck's book *The Causes and Effects of Smoking*, which many would consider its critics to have won hands down. Gibson makes the fair point that, at the least, Eysenck's approach to some of the topics has been markedly less critical than his approach to psychoanalysis, although he did finally conclude that there was little empirical evidence for extra-sensory perception or for the validity of astrological predictions.

It is difficult to escape some consideration of motive, particularly in the context of the more overtly political controversies, since Eysenck has been accused of being a "racist" and a "fascist" because he has drawn attention to what he thinks are inherited differences in intelligence between ethnic groups. More moderate critics have regarded his publication of these opinions as offensive, be-

cause it provides an apparently respectable academic cloak for those who really do have "racist" motives. This argument can be turned back on itself since it, in turn, might be seen as an excuse for those who denied Eysenck his right to speak as a university investigator.

The most attractive part of the book is the Appendix, in which Eysenck defends the right of scientists to speak freely about their discoveries and their views, a slim scientific Aesopology. Gibson's conclusion, that Eysenck decries "the purveyors of hatred", whether of the left or the right, and has less ethnic bias than most members of the human race, is surely just. That does not mean that his scientific judgment is correct.

Unfortunately, the arguments for and against the positions taken by Eysenck in these various controversies are not fully dealt with. Gibson underestimates the ability of "the general reader" to understand quite complex scientific problems when these are discussed in plain English. Moreover, he is unwilling to provide an overall judgement himself. This is particularly evident in his discussion of the personality theories, which ends with a brief presentation of the views of various experts, for and against, followed by an escape clause: "There have been extensive developments in the sophisticated use of both theory and practice, which are hardly to be explained to those not intimately concerned in the field".

This even-handed justice, six of one being matched point for point with half-a-dozen of the other, leaves the author's own position ambiguous, an impression enhanced by the rather far-fetched parallels he sees between his subject's work and that of Freud. Perhaps it is unfair to expect more attention to have been paid to developments in other fields — including biological, epidemiological and clinical psychiatry, physiology and neuro-psychology, and the social sciences — which would have provided the scientific context for an appreciation of the programme of research carried out by Eysenck and his colleagues: without this, however, and without some attention to the historical and political aspects of the problems under discussion, it is difficult for a reader to reach an informed judgement about their scientific contribution.

The Development of Children's Friendships edited by Steven R. Asher and John M. Gottman (347pp. Cambridge University Press, £20. 0 521 23103 5) is a recent addition to the Cambridge Studies in Social and Emotional Development series. The book covers the topics of group processes and social-cognitive processes in a collection of twelve essays on the impact of peer relationships on the development of children.

Cultivating the imagination

By Robin Robbins

L. J. KNIGHTS:

Selected Essays in Criticism

21pp. Cambridge University Press.

119.50 (paperback), 16.50

0 521 23628 2

Culled (with one exception) from his three volumes of *Explications*, *Selected Essays in Criticism*, along with "Hanker" and *Other Shakespearean Essays* (1979), serves up the cream of L. J. Knights' shorter pieces. It is welcome in two respects: firstly for reasoning to print essays of the 1940s that are as fresh and encouraging as ever to the reader approaching, say, Herbert or Claudel for the first time. Secondly, it read in the order in which they were originally published, these essays allow a survey in little of the intellectual career of one of our most penetrating and dependable critics. Because, indeed, Professor Knights can be depended on almost continuously for a clear conception of his aims, keen literary insight, and a sturdy (though undogmatic) commitment to serious principles, one may read the collection in any order, with its chronological order of subject, with its jarring sense of alternating between a young man seeking the bubble reputation and an established figure with eyes severe exploiting a licence to print.

It is as if one of the latest pieces, "Literature and the Teaching of Literature" (1973), had been present in Knights' mind from the beginning. Though here printed just, it could have stood at the head of the volume as a programme which has been steadfastly carried out over nearly half a century. It is no mere rationalization, like Milton's in the *Defensio Secunda* of occasional pieces as a connected work, but a statement of principles consciously held to from the beginning. These principles include the unapologetic conviction that the writing and the reading of imaginative literature are essential to the human race if we are to retain our humanity. Insight into ourselves and each other, awareness of our own and other societies, understanding of relationships between people that differ from those we know in our own lives — all these

are fostered in the reader by the serious writer and in the writer even in the act of writing of something to organize and express perceptions of the world in imaginative forms.

Knights does not, however, produce a critique merely by applying an ideology or process to a piece of writing: the organizing power itself is a particular concern, how the writer generates and transmits intellectual energy, and how he or she uses the stuff itself of writing, words and structures, to embody and express value as well as content. Not only are these processes fruitfully applied throughout this book, "Literature and the Teaching of Literature" states them so clearly and cogently that, given the confusion and unnecessary self-deprecation all too often expressed by teachers of English, it could usefully be discussed in every department in the world, as a model, but as a standard by which, through agreement and disagreement, to clarify beliefs and aims, making the pursuit of their vocation more pleasurable for teachers and more helpful to students.

Although the principles and standards to which Professor Knights has held are consistent in kind and quality, there is a perceptible shift of emphasis. The essays on Herbert and Claudel remain pertinent because, like their subjects, they are concerned with perennial human problems and values — inner conflict and depression, motives and morals. After a decade in which Knights' attention was focused chiefly on Shakespeare, a greater stress on the importance of the imagination is signalled in 1967 by, appropriately, the essay on Coleridge, "Ideas and Symbols", with its claim for "man's capacity for growth and renewal in response to the transforming energies in structures of the imagination". In "Coleridge as Critic" (1974), what Coleridge took from Schiller and Kant, the importance to human life of the cultivated imagination, and therefore of the literature that feeds, expands, and energizes that imagination, is underlined by Knights, whose restatement is all too potentially necessary in an age prone to treat literature as an easy route to a paper qualification or as passing entertainment.

As well as being explicitly stated, the deepening of this concern is ex-

emplified by English's two essays on Henry James. In the first "Henry James and the Trapped Spectator", Knights draws attention to the novel's exploration of egoists who "thwart" the development of another's life, and seeks to bring out "the seriousness, the relevance and coherence of the minute particulars of the style". The chief concern is with human intellect and with words, only towards the end involving reference to the life that is thwarted as the extension and refinement of consciousness of that intelligence which, in Santayana's words, is the highest form of vitality. In "Henry James and Human Liberty" (1975), while taking up from Proust a theme related to the bondage discussed in the earlier essay, that of domination, whether it be the destruction of children by parents to safeguard moral and social beliefs, or the more insidious captivity of ostensibly benevolent patronage, Knights finally values James most not just for asserting the value of consciousness, but for making his readers use their imaginations "in an area of concern — the area of pressure and coercion — that is, quite literally, central to the future of our civilization".

The essays on James also illustrate a point at which Knights's insight stops short, perhaps inhibited by his own wise caution about "the dangers inherent in the attempt to find a simple 'explanation' of an author's work in terms of his life". Knights perceives that "a feeling as of being buried alive . . . runs through James's work from first to last", that one of his main preoccupations is with "the plight of the trapped creature", the sensitive man "shut off from the free enjoyment of living . . . by 'circumstances' or by something in his own nature or his own past history". The sense of exclusion from all he would have liked most to enjoy in life "left in *The Princess Casanoviana* by Hyacinth the name itself, as, for James, during lunch Robinson. In the second essay, as well as noticing the children whose life is denied by their parents' rigid values, Knights discusses the relationship between young sculptor and older patron in *Roderick Hudson*, and seems as imperceptive as the latter in not seeing that Maule's self-deception involves a love that desires to possess, veiled as altruistic patronage, not the crude will to dominate found in less sympathetic characters. These situations

of oppression and repression, the filling of inner life and prevention of involvement with the life of others, may be seen as pre-eminently paradigmatic of a then indispensable but supremely important part of James's homosexuality.

It is perhaps partly this blind spot which makes Knights anxious to assert that Glynade in Marlowe's *Dido Queen of Carthage* (Ovid's boy-shepherd of Ilion, in a "baby-figure", obviously infantile; it is not assumed that every woman who is landed on a man's knee, though kindly called "baby", is pre-adolescent. But it is not only discomfort at the idea of a middle youth that distorts the argument: Glynade (who himself asks only for a jewel and a brooch, and seems more mature than duelling Jupiter) is cut down to fit an argument about excess related to infantile experience which derives from Freud. For one whose intellectual abilities were presumably honed in the 1930s, Knights is usually free from dated assumptions. From Marx he adopts only well-supported ideas. But my critic nowadays who feels liable to slip into using the clichés of Freudian hypothesis to "explain" a theme or character in literature (unless the author himself was under the influence) would be well advised to consult Paul Kline's *Port and Fantasy in Freudian Theory* to check exactly what had and what had not been experimentally verified by 1972.

For the most part Knights is well grounded against such dangers. He eschews another pseudo-psychological fashion, the spilling of archetypes, as sometimes facile, producing criticism "more shallow instead of more profound". Despite his firm and clearly expressed belief in the serious value of imaginative literature, he usually avoids strident righteousness. The exception is the earliest essay in this collection, "Restoration Comedy: the Reality and

the Myth", where, though he properly subordinates moralizing to literary criticism, he enunciates in response to incoherent, over-general praise for the genre, an over-general condemnation, with the well-known conclusion that "they are trivial, gross and dull". When he discusses Donne's intrigues as "not more than human significance" than those of a "hardy-ward cock", he is not seeing anything. Fichte was unaware of the more intelligent and original Restoration dramatists knowingly comment on the cloaking of natural native vices under foreign manners which gave an impetus to British sexual hypocrisy. Knights's figure of comparison does not command immediate sympathy now, when popularized ethology sends us back to Aesop, and we feel the extent of cock in man more than did some stry-eyed humanists of the 1930s. From the number of such plays he gives evidence of having read (but not, disabblingly, seen), his seems to be a case of literary indigestion. Surfacing on the trivial, he cannot recall the few nourishing morsels.

Another small reservation might be made about Professor Knights's perception of the rhythms in Ben Jonson's verse. Ut

to your unwary'd paine
Oh Gathering, Bountie in pouring on
again?

he remarks that "the second part of the line, from the reversed stress of 'Bountie', seems to pour itself out with something of Shelley's own abundance". It is disconcerting that one usually so closely attentive to the text should take "Gathering, Bountie in" as six syllables instead of the four dictated by the decasyllabic line. But to be able to find only such minute exceptions testifies to the standard of a volume infused with qualities of mind and heart that make it worthily representative of the line going back through Coleridge to Samuel Johnson.

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Fandango-ing to a fortune

By Anita Brookner

CHARLES CASTLE:

La Belle Otero
The Last Great Courtisan
192pp. Michael Joseph. £8.95.
0 7181 1935 5

In 1917 Liane de Pougy, Princess Ghika, saw a woman of her acquaintance strolling along the Champs Elysées. The woman was very fat, pleasant looking, and swathed in furs; she had an air of authority. Liane de Pougy recognized her, not by her smile but by her enormous pearl earrings. She was her former accomplice and rival Caroline Otero, the original *croqueuse de diamants*, star of the Folies Bergères, and arguably the most successful courtesan of the Belle Époque.

In 1954 Caroline Otero permitted herself to be photographed in the small room she occupied in the Hôtel Novelly, rue d'Angleterre, in Nice. She was eighty-six years old. She looks a spry old party, elegantly dressed, pearl-drop earrings in position, hair now rather thin but eyes still round and bright. She might be the respected matriarch of any French middle-class family, the one the prospective bride or bridegroom would be taken to wait on at an appropriately designated Sunday. She even has the family album on her knee, as if to initiate the new recruit into the mysteries of a respected and respectable line. But in fact the photographs are all of herself, and although she was very briefly married, there were no children, and she grew old in almost total isolation.

Another photograph shows her even older and not much more reflective: the flesh of her face is now soft and without resilience, the sleeves of her sweater baggy, as if constantly pushed up above her elbows. She sits in front of an iconostasis of photographs of herself at the height of her career. Her days are spent in this one room, heating up on her gas-ring little meals prepared by a local *rôtisserie*, feeding the pigeons on her tiny balcony. Her enormous fortune has long since been lost at the gaming tables. No body knows her, apart from a few croupiers with encyclopedic memories and a local tradeswoman, Assunta Giovagnoli. Her health and appetite are excellent, but decline not apparent.

She was to be blessed with a providentially easy death. On August 11, 1965, she took a stroll, collected her lunch (jugged hare), went back to her room and died quickly of a heart attack. She was ninety-seven years old, and only the smell of burning food alerted her neighbours that anything was amiss. Her funeral was sparsely attended, and of the three wreaths on the coffin only one seemed pertinent: it was inscribed "La Roue Tourne", and was sent by the croupiers of Juan-les-Pins.

In another photograph, La Belle Otero peers coyly between two cardboard trees in the photographer's studio. She looks about twenty-four years old (she was born in 1866) and is already a veteran of the cabaret circuit. Her plump sheeplike face is enlivened by brilliantly black eyes and eyebrows and framed in exaggerated waves of black hair, dressed out from a centre parting. Robes of pearls of varying sizes and lengths articulate her figure from neck to waist. Her hips describe a perfect oval and this is emphasized by the ruffled work of her dress about mid-thigh level. Her waist is tiny and was to remain so while the rest of her swelled to more magnificent proportions. She features, in yet another photograph, in some sort of body stocking. Her short thick thighs clanked, her waist a small but puny thing, constricted circle separating the awe-inspiring bosom and rump. She wears a pearl necklace and earrings and trails a fur cape on the floor. Her upturned eyes and ethereal expression no doubt give extra spice to this most shameless manifesto of her sexuality.

The extraordinary power of her allure was never in any doubt and this seems to have made her the most honest of the great courtesans. She was primitive, stupid, and tonally uninhibited; her dancing created the sort of shock waves that had every man in the audience reaching for his cheque book. Unlike Liane de Pougy, who was almost a lady, or Cléo de Mérode, who liked playing with dolls and may have been slightly retarded, or the vicious and ravishing Emilienne d'Alençon, there was no hint of oddness in Otero's make-up, and, unlike her fellow professionals she never consoled herself with the affection of women. Indeed, she consoled herself, for her very brief disappointments in love, with more and more extravagant performances, executing her world-famous fandango whenever and wherever she was asked to do so, from Carlsbad to Bucharest, from Lisbon to St Petersburg, from Berlin to New York, and, on one memorable occasion, on top of a table at Maxim's.

In many ways she was the ideal business woman, tirelessly professional, sleeping with anyone from whom she might show a profit, accumulating her many houses and her Alfonso XIII of Spain and Nicholas II of Russia and Edward VII of England and the second Duke of Westminster, but from many, many more obscure and unattractive men, all of whom were willing to pay for the privilege of being seen in possession of her. She had no claims to any excellence of taste, was totally lacking in sentiment, had no confidence but her maid, and took a pride in being a true *cabotine*, a performer, a Bohemian, a guttersnipe. For this she earned a certain genuine respect, not only from her contemporaries but from those who were in a sense fellow wage-earners: agents, servants, theatre managers, even journalists.

Emotionally she remained immature, almost unborn, as might have been expected from one with her early history. Her mother was a gypsy dancer and fortune teller, her father a compulsive gambler. They seem to have hated their children, although they produced six of them, and Caroline Otero was packed off to boarding-school at a very young age. As the fees were not paid she was made to work in the kitchens. She took her first lover at the age of twelve and began her professional dancing career at the same time. The pattern was set for life: she would fall in love, momentarily but extravagantly, with weak, handsome, and exploitative men, and dance for money, as often as possible. Although she never had a lesson even as a child she seems to have been a true dancer, not light on her feet, but with all the power concentrated in the deep furrow of her back and the muscles of her neck and shoulders, able to excite herself and her audience with the ritualistic stamping of the *zapateado* and the manipulation of the flounces on her skirt.

The essentially monotonous story of her early success, her continuous triumphs, her wealth, her establishments, her lovers, her jewels, has been told by Mme Otero herself in a slightly mendacious memoir, and is retold here, in less than lustrious prose, by Charles Castle. It is a narrative in the tradition, a story in which men make advances, enjoy favours, shower gifts, redouble their efforts, take their leave, and bid farewell. Love, in the unspiced conjurations of Mme Otero and Mr Castle, is an affair of quick wits, compromising documents, jealous rivals, and cash payments. Disquieting references are made to the Third Empire, to "a hunting lodge at Oise outside Paris", and "the hospital at Beaujon". Nothing is ever said quite correctly. This state of affairs admirably conveys the no doubt sluttish nature of Mme Otero's intellectual and imaginative life but tells us very little of what she was actually like.

Fortunately, the watchful and sapient Colette was around to comment. During her music-hall days, Colette, too cerebral to be a good performer, devoted her better energies to studying those who were. She seems to have felt a comradeship for Mme Otero, then at the height of her fame, and the two were able to relax together, rather like a couple of clubmen enjoying a cigar, the elder advising the younger with the sort of maxim that gives away no secrets. Invited to supper one Saturday, the thirty-year-old Colette took in at a glance the miles of satin embroidered with storks, the Manila shawl draped over the grand piano, the dishes of chocolates, the tiger skins, the Louis XV bedroom, and the pink and blue window draperies, through which could be seen the blue Mercedes, built especially tall and narrow to accommodate the *agettes* and the ostrich plumes of Mme Otero's hats.

Colette found Mme Otero dressed in her favourite off-duty garb: silk stockings, down-at-heel slippers, camisole and petticoat, over which she had thrown a tegawon. The ageing and expressionless face remained unmoved throughout the rigours of a game of bezique, which she played, as she played all games, with total application. As her excitement grew more intense, she simply loosened the game she stood up and tapped her stomach and then, with a smile of simple happiness, sat down at the table. They ate *puchero*, a vast dish of beef, ham, boiled chicken, sausages, boiled vegetables and beans. Mme Otero ate four or five platefuls of this nourishing concoction, her face serene and repete. After a strawberry ice and a cup of coffee she took up her castagnettes and began to dance. She danced, on the occasion described by Colette in *Mes Apprentissages*, for five hours, until the sweat rolled down her back and the room smelled of musk. Her sauce-stained napkin would be used to mop her neck and amplitis, and after only brief pauses she would dance again, glorying in the ability of her



A caricature of Otero in one of her Folies Bergères poses, by Sem, c 1900; from the book reviewed here.

body to obey her will and to satisfy her appetite.

It is an unforgettable image of a woman complete in herself, dependant on no one, supremely confident, devoid of doubts or fears for the future. She seems to have needed no friends or intimates but occasionally rescued downtrodden *copines* who had fallen on hard times and whom she would take into her service. Otherwise, her entourage was exclusively masculine, largely unattractive, prestigious, wealthy, vain and as simple-minded as herself. Her career, both amorous and professional, lasted until she was well into her fifties, by which time she had lost several fortunes at the gaming tables. She had no need of woman's rights; she simply understood and exercised her own rights. In the particular career open to the talents which she had chosen she either knew or acknowledged no rival. Her pre-eminence was saluted in terms which even today strike one as heated, and

although, like her famous contemporaries, her "net" consisted mainly of wearing her huge armourof jewels on the stage, she remained the performer she was always enchanted to be, and she performed not only for others but for herself as well.

Her life shades off into dullness after the Great War, by which time she was little too old to enjoy or to annex the new fortunes of the millionaires. But there were still men willing to take her at her word, and she was still a frill. Her journey downhill to the Hôtel Novelly does not seem to have been particularly painful. Presumably her lack of introspection helped. Presumably there was still money to waste on the way. The jewels mysteriously vanished and were no doubt used for currency. At an age which others would regard as canonical she was still absorbed by her early triumphs and plastered the walls of her room with photographs of herself to her hour-glass prime. She left nothing, which was as it should be, for she was totally alone, only mildly eccentric, still elegant, and still blessed with a healthy appetite.

It is intriguing to reflect that she was a contemporary of Sigmund Freud. To Freud's question, "What do women want?", Otero would no doubt have replied, "Being there", as opposed to "getting there", which is presumably what men want. Or perhaps she would not have replied at all, being both too stupid and too clever to have wasted her time on working it out. Whatever the answer - and this slight book does not supply it - it is evident from her career that success of a global kind is available to women, that it was so supremely in the years between 1890 and 1914, and that such success depends less on the acquisition of certain privileges and responsibilities than on possession of a knowledge of certain realities. It is a matter of debate whether these realities have changed. Women of La Belle Otero's persuasion would argue that they have not and that they never will. Her career may serve as a footnote to our times.

Michael Hofmann

LITERARY CRITICISM

Dangerously imaginative

By Clive Sinclair

DOROTHY SEIDMAN BILIK:

Immigrant-Survivors
Post-Holocaust Consciousness in Recent Jewish American Fiction
216pp. Wesleyan University Press.
\$20.70.
0 8195 5046 9

Jewish legend tells of the *Lamed-vov Tsadikim* or Thirty-six Saints, upon whose anonymous grace the continuing existence of the world depends. The title of André Schwarz-Bart's great novel, *The Last of the Just*, refers to these men. In addition to the thirty-six there are other *tsadikim*, pious men who act as "teacher and moral example to others". These are the "Immigrant-Survivors" of Dorothy Seidman Bilik's study. She proposes these new Americans, survivors of the Holocaust, as representative Jews more suited to this grim anti-Israelite era than the suburban schlemiel. Bilik believes that these *tsadikim* have realized modern Jewish American literature, just as the first wave of immigrants created it. As her subtitle suggests, it is they who have raised the consciousness of contemporary writers.

For this task they have been chosen, not by God, but by history. Bilik sees them continuing the Jewish tradition of *aggada*, telling secular tales designed to illustrate "the foundations of a

system of ethics and faith". History has seen to it that these *tsadikim* are not makers of stories, but commentators. Nonetheless, Bilik argues, they have provided the ideal solution for those Jewish American writers "who wished to give form to their post-Holocaust consciousness", but were unwilling to write directly about the Holocaust itself. Instead of playing, like Philip Roth, with the "solipsism of sensitive Jewish sons and their problematic mothers", the more serious writers turned to the "painfully acquired wisdom of immigrant-survivor fathers and mothers as the embodiment of that consciousness".

The *tsadikim* offered two things: authenticity and particularity. Bilik observes how this particularity - for example, the way some survivors literally crawled out of mass graves - strips reality of its protective metaphors. It is impossible to turn such material into an echo of an epic hero's descent into the underworld. The same point is well-made in Saul Bellow's *Herzog*: "Just as machinery has embodied ideas of good, so the technology of destruction has also acquired a metaphysical character. The practical questions have thus become the ultimate questions as well. Annihilation is no longer a metaphor. Good and evil are real." Although noting it, Bilik fails to explore the consequences of this situation, and ignores Herzog's difficulties in coming to terms with these realities. How can Herzog call his misfortune at the hands of Madeleine "suffering" when it is compared to the fate of European Jewry? Bilik seems uncon-

cerned that the Nazis have robbed us of a vocabulary for feeling, just as they have robbed the Jewish writer of his creative innocence. David Schearl's desire to do away with his father in *Call it Sleep* is, she says, simply Freudian, but such desires are not so simple in the light of the Holocaust. Given these thoughts, what right has a secure Jewish American author, using the moral superiority invested in him by Bilik's *tsadikim*, to sit in judgment on the world - especially if there is some deep connection between the creativity of a writer and the destructiveness of history? Bilik sidesteps the issue thus: "What were unimaginable historic particulars before the Holocaust remain 'unspeakable' and do not comport easily within the probabilities and universals of conventional literature" - and thereby misses one of the most interesting aspects of the "post-Holocaust consciousness".

One of Isaac Bashevis Singer's recent stories, "The Betrayer of Israel", tells of a little boy who watches while his father, a rabbi, judges the case of a polygamist. The rabbi accuses the man of being a betrayer of Israel, but the little boy turns out to be no less culpable. The boy is Singer himself, of course, and in retelling the sordid tale he, too, has become a betrayer of Israel. Likewise, Philip Roth, in *The Ghost Writer*, describes how his alter ego, Nathan Zuckerman, turns a fami-

ly scandal into fiction, causing his "bewildered father" to think himself and all Jewry "gratuitously disgraced and jeopardized by my inexplicable betrayal". Both Singer and Roth make it apparent that a Jewish writer given to expressing the unmentionable has to choose between his talent and his people. Both authors chose their talent, and thereby contributed to their father's deaths, or so their fiction would have us believe. Such patricidal guilt is complicated by Jewish history, in which the naïve desire to murder the father was made hideously real by the Nazis. So the surviving sons reincarnate their fathers again and again, as a sort of adjudicator, as they wrestle with their talents to produce works that will somehow differentiate them from the Nazis. Their novels become attempts to assert a moral control over their imagination. Singer blames his imaginative excesses upon a dybbuk while Roth ascribes his to the id, but they are the true sources of their stories. Bilik's *tsadikim* are not prompters but restrainers, characters who remind their creators what a dangerous thing an imagination can be. Who needs an imagination with such a history? It is certainly possible for a Jewish writer to turn to history without troubling his imagination, but surely real literature will only result when his imagination is unlocked.

In her anxiety to treat the Holocaust

as tactfully as possible Bilik ignores the moral ambivalence at the heart of literature, Jewish or otherwise. She introduces Ruth as an example of "a growing post-Holocaust sensibility", yet does not discuss *The Professor of Desire*, a wonderful example of the very sensibility she is delineating. For the novel moves from scenes of David Kepesh's sexual fascism to a melancholy idyll, presided over by Kepesh's ailing father and his friend, Mr Barbatnik, survivor of Hitler's camps. The reason for this exclusion is the fact that Bilik treats only works that have an Immigrant-Survivor as protagonist. Consequently, she misses an even more important opportunity to compare *Satan in Goray* with *The Slave*, two novels by Isaac Bashevis Singer, both set in seventeenth-century Poland in the aftermath of the Chmelnicki massacres; one written before the Holocaust, the other afterwards. Perhaps the most telling difference is in the treatment of the heroines: Rechelo dies, possessed by a dybbuk, in a sadistic parody of birth; Sarah also dies in childbirth, but is survived by a son, who begins life anew in Israel. When Singer or Malamud or Bellow do something of which Bilik approves she tends to complicate them with the word "during". *Immigrant-Survivors* is undoubtedly an important book; but if only Dorothy Seidman Bilik had herself been more daring.

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BODLEY
HEAD

commentary

Flaying the fat

By Richard Cobb

Honoré Daumier, 1808-1879: The
Armand Hammer Collection
Royal Scottish Academy, Edinburgh.

In what represented the most signifi-
cant social migration of the first two-
thirds of the nineteenth century, *la*
monnaie à Paris - the storming of the
French capital by wave after wave of
furnished and ambitious young male
southerners - Daumier was very
much a precursor, taking the inviting
road north at least thirty years ahead
of his dark-haired, thin-faced com-
patriots. He was only eight when his
father moved the family from
Marseille to Paris in 1816, so that he
must have arrived in the city at much
the same time as his compatriot -
and, later, one of his most loathed
targets - Thiers, born in 1797, three
years too old to qualify as an *enfant*
du siècle.

It would be tempting to think that
Daumier's father, a picture-framer,
may have been consciously following
in the footsteps of the *fatheads* of the
summer of 1792. Certainly
Daumier's stern, humourless and un-
remitting form of republicanism must
have owed something to the experi-
ence of living in the capital of ultra-
royalism and white terrorism. The
politics of Marseille had been bitterly
divisive during the revolutionary
period, making of the Jacobin minority
committed and exalted apostles.
It is not improbable that Daumier's
father developed an embittered neo-
jacobinism in the capital of southern
royalism. Perhaps Daumier's own
commitment to the politics of vio-
lence and class war may have de-
rived from the southern port. There
is certainly a southern ferocity about
most of his work. It is more likely,
however, that his deep concern for
the poor and the underprivileged
may have been inspired by his early
years of hunger, insecurity and cold
while he sought a living in the bleak
northern capital during the early
years of the *Restoration*.

In the course of sixty-three years
spent in Paris, much of it in the
Saint-Louis, not then a haven for
millionaires, Daumier lived through
three bloody revolutions and a coup
d'état, his working life spanning the
most violent period in modern
French history, including the sangui-
nary repression of the working-
class uprisings in Paris and in Lyon
of the early 1830s. As an artist, Daumier
was to play relentlessly *le*
bourgeois, Louis-Philippe - his
bizarre head portrayed as a mon-
strous pear - and his increasingly
obscure ministers. Daumier hated the
fat, the well-fed, hated a régime
dominated by heavy eaters, so that
much of his work in the 1830s and
1840s crudely but accurately depicts
a society polarized between the fat
and the thin, the warm and the cold,
the thickly-clad - fur coats and fur
collars, vast mufflers, indeed a
bourgeoisie emmitouflée, ungainly,
hypochondriac and in constant terror
of draughts - and the pitifully under-
clad, shivering in coats worn to the
seams and in waterlogged shoes. No
political cartoonist has ever been so
aware of the relationship between
class and clothing. Indeed, in the
idealized political virtue of the bare-
chest of the working man and the
revolutionary, the shirt unbuttoned
almost down to the level of the navel
(*déshabillé*), the sleeves rolled up to
reveal powerful arms, men of cour-
age and virtue contrasted to the slip-
pered concierge and to the frog-like
bourgeois in his pebble-glasses
(*Monsieur Thiers* in person).

But Daumier takes politics beyond
the pictorial contrast between *le ven-
tre législatif* and a pallid, famished,
skeletal common people (even
oppressed Poland emerges as a
trembling, dolent and emaciated



A Daumier cartoon from Charivari, March 24, 1865. There was a current
French vogue for horsemen, with clubs springing up in several towns
devoted to its consumption, and banquets at which the tables were
decorated with horseshoes. The illustration comes from the catalogue to
this exhibition - 275pp including about 190 plates, 25 in colour - available
at £5 plus £1 postage from the Royal Scottish Academy, The Mound,
Edinburgh EH2 2EL

female figure). He reserves his
greatest and most vengeful talent for
the portrayal of judges and barristers,
the hated denizens of the Palais de
Justice, whose thin and ravaged
faces reveal limitless reserves of self-
ishness, hypocrisy and greed. Like
Rowlandson, Daumier possesses the
unique talent of depicting a human
face in movement; Rowlandson's
people are wide-faced, speaking,
shouting, or laughing out of lopsided
mouths: East Anglian faces that one
encounters still today.

Daumier is at his most viril-
lous in his drawn indeed in acid - when
dispatching an *avocat* in full flow, *en*
pleine péroraison, his wide sleeves
flying like the dark wings of a crow,
his dark mouth exercised in false
compassion and in the accumulated
flood of rhetoric. His masterpieces
all inhabit the dark court-rooms and
the dismal corridors of the Palais,
the rapacious barristers, the humble
suplicants. I doubt if any other
artist has been as successful in the
actual portrayal of speech, of French
rhetoric, accompanied by formalized
gesture and by the eyes raised up-
wards, as the *péroration*, a magnifi-
cent set-piece, cascades towards its
climactic end, amidst a flutter of
scattered pages. Daumier's genius as
an artist may still be best appreciated
by a visit to the Palais at the present
day: the red-robed judge, the young
avocats, leaning forward to pick up
the words of their clients, represent
the same facial *tics*, the judges
bored, half asleep and self-satisfied,
the barristers in thin, vulturine pro-
file. If there is a slight element of
disappointment in the collection
seen earlier this year at the Royal
Academy and now in Edinburgh, it is
that the Palais and its black-and-
white cartoons are not more fully
re-presented.

Fortunate - as an intransigent re-
publican and a portrayal of the
French bourgeoisie at the height of
its power and self-satisfaction - in
the violent period in which he lived,
Daumier was also blessed with the
beginning of the railway age. He
could depict the terrors of the

approaching tunnel, the supine com-
forts of the first class, the open
sociability of the third: a variety of
faces in neat rows, full on, and, in
odd juxtaposition, the peasant
woman with her basket, the priest in
shovel hat, the cavernous-faced
monk, the beauteous expression of the
reassured bourgeois, safe because
surrounded, the lines of woe, worry,
care and work of the laundress or
the seamstress, as they are borne
along together in common fear on
lines none too secure. Daumier's
album was provided with dully
provenance by the quirks and
humours of *les transports en com-
mun*, a bringing together, in a swer-
ling and sometimes sickening intima-
cy of the same disparate elements
as those portrayed in the rumbling rail-
way carriage.

Daumier is an incomparable social

historian, as he creeps up the stairs,
past the dangerous *loge* of the con-
cierge and the door of the watchful
propriétaire on the first floor, head-
ing desperately for the relative safety
of the seventh floor or the attic, the
rent still unpaid; or, on the contrary,
having indeed paid it, and on time,
striding up boldly, stick in hand, his
pulsed forward, to find the owner
actually outside his door, ready to
greet him effusively: *bonjour, Mon-
sieur Dubois, beau temps, n'est-ce
pas, pour la saison, mais le fond de*
l'air restait frais. He not only succeeds
in showing the face in motion, he
actually enables us to eavesdrop on
the conversation: formal, ingrati-
ing, naive, simple, loving, and re-
capturing its tone. He penetrates
everywhere: the bed, marital or no,
the inviting confidant, the restaurant,
the *gargote*, the attic, the shop, an
following the *petit peuple* in his
moments of leisure. The energetic
action of eating, of swallowing the
dozen oysters, is as well conveyed
the sweat pouring off the brow at
the napkin-up-to-the-chin execution
as that of a barrister throwing his
self into his final rhetorical flourish.
Daumier is, in every sense, an artist
of movement.

Perhaps because he shows com-
pulsion, as well as humour, because he
has a soft spot for children (particu-
larly knowing, irrelevant urban ones,
gamins de Paris ready to cock a
snook at the pretentious M.
Prud'homme) and because he reserves
a ready sympathy for the innocent
victims of awful events, of State vio-
lence, of Revolution, and of both
burial, one should forgive his
curious *Marseillais* his virulent
satire, his hypercritical, self-satisfied,
and, when frightened, unbearably
cruel. It was a cruel period. Daumier
at least, though he often idealized
violence, was a pugnacious, fell for
Kossuth, indulged in fashionable na-
tionalism, was on the side of those
unable to defend themselves. It was
not the same side as his compatriot,
M. Thiers. One may feel that he was
unfair to the gurgulous and sensu-
allymphic King of the French; but at
least he had no illusions about Louis-
Napoleon and the *sous-off* brand of
militarism represented by the rail-
road, swagging *rat-poll*. And, in his
period at least, the fat were more
likely to be privileged, over-
provided-for and insensitive than the
thin. For all his acid ferocity, there is
in his work, both kindliness, and a
good sort of gawky tenderness, and a
great deal of quite gentle humour.

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for high stakes in
the High RenaissanceThe Pope, His Banker, and Venice
Felix Gilbert

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commentary

Domestic arts

By Christopher Reid

Ceri Richards
Tate Gallery

Ceri Richards was, everyone agrees,
a marvelously gifted artist. He drew
fluently, bringing into play a line
that spoke of both energy and grace.
He had a wide-ranging imagination
and was able to attempt not only
domestic, intimate themes, quotidian
idylls, but also the great dramas that
are implied by such titles as "The
Rape of the Sabine" and "The
Cycle of Nature". Music and poetry
were powerful influences, every bit
as much as the work of those mas-
ters of his own art - Delacroix,
Manet, Picasso - to whom he con-
stantly paid the homage of reference
and imitation. He had an idiosyncrat-
ic, but very specific, sense of
narrative, and he took risks with
subject-matter, symbolism and col-
our, such as few other British paint-
ers of his day would have dared to
contemplate.

So why, when all this can be said
in his favour, is the Tate's current
exhibition such a disappointment? It
begins impressively enough: the first
pictures a visitor sees are drawings
and paintings, for the most part of
the artist's family circle, that show
what he could accomplish with pen-
cil, pen or brush. Two pen-and-ink
sketches of his wife, Frances, and a
delicately detailed pencil study of one
of his daughters, entitled "Rhiannon
Asleep" - tousled hair, lips pouting
to expel breath, a real feeling for the
weight of the child's head - are in-
deed masterly.

An adjacent gallery contains the
relief constructions by which
Richards first achieved note in the
1930s. These are elegant, sophisticated
works, knowingly influenced by
the collages of Picasso and of certain
practitioners of Dada, and they are
playful without being coy or footling.
Puns and oblique notations of the
kind that Picasso introduced to the



"Pianist" (1968), from the exhibition reviewed here.

modern vocabulary are deftly used.
In "Pianist" (1934) a rather small
work, the body of the instrument is
rendered by an unexpectedly sus-
pense, jutting chunk of wood, while
the keyboard becomes a sort of key-
pattern doodle. In other such pieces
- "Man with a Pipe", "The Sculptor
and his Model", "The Variable
Costermonger" - metal templates,
buttons, odd bits of timber and
lengths of string play their part in
the general metamorphosis and re-
demption of normally disdained ma-
terials.

The wit here is highly enjoyable,
but it is, one has to add, of a kind
that had already been more fully
exploited by Picasso. Evidence of
this can be found at the Hayward's
current Picasso exhibition, where the
master's guitars and bottles of 1914
and thereafter, knocked together
from junk timber and metal scraps,
seem so much braver than anything
attempted by his followers. One out-
standing feature of Picasso's pieces is
their undisguised, even flaunted,
shabbiness. Against this, the trim
carpentry, dainty arrangement and
relished exposure of grainy textures

in Richards's constructions give them
an all too self-consciously crafted air.
One is tempted to conclude that
Richards was at all periods mastered
by his craft. Why did he never find
a subject that would allow his great
talents their unbounded expression?
The doggedness with which he work-
ed away at certain themes - St. Cecilia,
the cycle of nature, "La Cathédrale
Engoulée", the life-size rhetoric of
Dylan Thomas's poetry - suggests
that a mighty, Promethean vision
was what he very much wanted; but
with a few exceptions these series
merely encouraged him to revamp
old mannerisms and to depend on
his ability to finish any composition
neatly and elegantly. There is, one
should say, hardly a picture in this
exhibition that does not have some
special compositional virtue. A few
canvases, especially from the artist's
later years, seem to me lurid, with
their throbbing oranges and blatan-
t blues, but at least he enjoyed the
handling of paint, for which one
ought to be grateful, considering
how many British artists have
apparently hated the stuff. His sense
of line never failed him. And yet, for

all his undoubted skills and intelli-
gence, Richards never attained the
heights that might once have been
thought his destiny.

Bryan Robertson's introduction to
the Tate catalogue (72pp, 58 plates,
eight in colour, Paperback £2.95 dur-
ing the exhibition, £4.95 later, plus
60p post & package, 0 905005 13 9)
reveals a likable, shy man, for whom
art-world politics were firmly to be
avoided, and who was never happier
than when in the bosom of his fam-
ily. Some of his loveliest paintings
depict happy domestic moments, to
which a piano, whether played or
with a sheet of music somewhere in
evidence, is often the key. I can
immediately think of "Tulips"
(1949), with its luscious, glossy yel-
low flowers in a plain vase, and
"Interior with Piano, Woman and
Child Painting" of the same year.
Picasso and Manet are the comman-
ding influences here. Unfortunately,
Richards appears at other times to
have come under the sway of Max
Ernst, who aided him when more
bombastic ideas were to be adre-
ssed, as in "The Force that Drives the
Water Through the Rocks Drives My
Red Blood" (1943/4) or "Falling
Forms" (1944).

It may have been his proneness to
accept strong influence, abetted by
his craftsmanlike flair for picking up
the tricks of others, that ultimately
frustrated Richards's own genius. He
could "do Ernst" as well as Ernst
could, but what was the point of
that? There is one painting in the
Tate show which, in a quite un-
intended way, dramatizes the problem:
"Yellow Interior" (1950). In the
foreground sits a woman, blank-
eted and Manet-like in her Mat-
tress chair. Behind her stands a scrawled
Picasso piano. And behind that is
the wallpaper, covered with those
brisk calligraphic squiggles that one
recognizes at once as part of
Richards's natural hand: how vigor-
ous they are, and how much they
look as if they would like to express
something more than mere wall-
paper!

Romantic colours

By Richard Combs

The Oberwald Mystery
Camden Plaza Cinema

The heroine of *The Oberwald Mystery*
is wrapped in all the mystery
and romance of a film star. The
queen of some fictitious, turn-of-the-
century state - mountaineous and
Middle European - she has remained
incognito, travelling from castle to
castle and veiled to everyone but her
maidservant since her husband, King
Frederick, was assassinated on their
wedding day ten years ago. This, of
course, is the behaviour not only of
Hollywood's fairy queens, such as
Orla Garrow, but of innumerable

figures of nineteenth-century rom-
ance. Jean Cocteau's original play,
The Eagle Has Two Heads, was
based on the careers of castle-crazy
Ludwig II of Bavaria and Empress
Elisabeth of Austria, and the mys-
tery of Oberwald might be con-
tinuous to that of Mayerling.
(Though in changing the title to
emphasize such a connection, the
Anglo-American has simultaneously
removed the mystery, by deleting
Cocteau's terse opening.)

What makes one see this version
in terms of movie stars and of a
certain self-consciousness about cin-
ema and art in general is not simply
the redundancy of its melodramatic
baggage, nor that Antonioni has de-
clared his lack of interest in the text
as such. But the presence of Monica
Vitti inevitably leads to the reflection

that for the past decade she has kept
herself under wraps almost as com-
pletely as the queen, and that her
unveiling here marks her first col-
laboration with Antonioni since *The
Red Desert* in 1964. The queen her-
self is inclined to see her spiritual
exile in poetical rather than political
terms, and ascribes her husband's
untimely end to his susceptibility
(like Ludwig II's) to artistic rather
than despotic excess. Her family, she
declares, is doomed because of its
love of the arts. So she is ripe for
her encounter with the young poet
and anarchist who invades her castle,
assassination-bound, one stormy
night, and turns out to be a dead
ringer for dead Frederick. She
already knows him from his satirical
poem, "The End of Royalty", which
she compliments for its "original
style" while welcoming its author as
her Angel of Death. Shades of Ten-
nessee Williams's *The Milk Train
Doesn't Stop Here Anymore*, which
was crossed with the Burton-Taylor
movie mythology in Joseph Losey's
film *Boom!*

The plot then becomes entangled
with court intrigue, as the queen and
her assassin-turned-lover attempt to
instigate a two-handed revolution,
but are headed off by the chief of
police. One might be tempted to see
in this a parable for our times, if
only because it is otherwise hard to
understand why a "modernist" a
director would have taken on so
dated a property. Antonioni himself
rather disingenuously, has suggested
that there is significance here:
"Words like anarchist, opposition,
power, Chief of Police, comrade,
group, all belong to our everyday
vocabulary." Apparently supporting
this line is the fact that the original
material has been treated and sub-
verted with a battery of up-to-date

technology. *The Oberwald Mystery*
was made for Italian television, using
new electronic equipment, then
transferred from video-tape to film,
allowing Antonioni to conduct some
unusual experiments with colour. At
the touch of a button, it seems,
colour can now be made to come
and go, washing the screen in bril-
liant hues or draining it of all but the
neriest touches. At times, characters
have their own auras (blue for the
chief of police, for instance, green
for the queen), which compete with
each other chromatically as the char-
acters contest verbally.

But the significance, one suspects,
remains perceptual rather than po-
litical. In *The Red Desert*, after all,
Antonioni tried to alter the way we
see things by tampering with colours
at source (painting apples and plants
strange ashen hues). And just as the
heroine of *The Oberwald Mystery*
might have seemed a good point to
pick up where he left off with Mon-
ica Vitti, so the project allows him to
dabble in revolutionary matters
pictorial rather than political. Antoni-
oni has always been plagued by the
assumption that so obviously "intel-
lectual" a director must have some
message of general import. The
architectural chilliness of his style
made him the acclaimed prophet of
1960s alienation (in the enigmatic
guise of Ms Vitti), until he seemed
in danger of becoming a trendy
captivity of himself with forays into
Swinging London (*Blow-Up*) and
hippie counter-culture (*Zabriskie
Point*). His virtual disappearance in
the 1970s could have been confirma-
tion that he was a fat that had seen
its time. In this light, it is interest-
ing that *The Oberwald Mystery* should
so deliberately court old-fashionedness
in order to try out something really

New Oxford books:

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of MountainsA Basque Shepherding
Community
Sandra Ott

The people of the commune of
Selnia-Engreaga insist that they live
not in a valley, but in 'the circle of
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community as a circle, and use the
word to apply to a range of
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Simon Rae

'What is Structuralism?'

Sir, - In his account of what he calls *structuralism* Ernest Gellner (July 31) states that "it propounds a theory of the human mind or of comprehension" which is the "premise inversion" of what he calls *empiricism*, by which he seems to mean any attempt to explain human psychology in naturalistic terms. He states that the central idea of empiricism can be summed up "in a phrase widely and erroneously attributed to Aristotle - there is nothing in the mind which was not first in the senses". May I point out that this ascription is far from erroneous? The doctrine which the empiricism encapsulates is evident in the second paragraph of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and is more forcibly stated in the last chapter of his *Analytics*, where sense perception is expressly made the foundation of his entire theory of knowledge. In seeking to explain how higher knowledge develops out of more primitive forms, Aristotle traces all forms of knowledge, animal and human, to a common source: "an innate critical faculty which is called sense perception" (*An Post* 99b).

Aristotle does not suggest that this is the end of the epistemological road - his scheme includes language, rational knowledge, creative intellect, and even, alas, metaphysics - but he unequivocally states that this is where knowledge begins, and where we must begin if we are to understand it. The trouble with structuralism, like all forms of idealism, is that it takes nature for granted and fails to inquire into the conditions of its possibility.

So much for the doctrine. As for the aphorism, far from being erroneous, it is, if anything, a watered-down version of a passage (*De Anim.* 432a) which states that "no one could ever learn or understand anything except by way of sense perception".

It is odd that Professor Gellner

should associate empiricism with Hume, a notorious sceptic. Aristotle once suggested that the sceptic should take a brisk walk to the edge of a precipice; if he stopped at the edge, that would be the end of scepticism; if he did not, that would be the end of the sceptic. This gives some insight into the importance Aristotle attached to sense perception.

T. P. WALDRON.
Wolfson College, Cambridge CB3 9BB.

'Conservatives and Conservatism'

Sir, - With no desire to risk injury in the crossfire between Jonathan Bradley and J. R. Vincent (Letters, July 31), I write simply to remind you, Sir, that you have been here before. Your issue of September 26, 1919, included an anonymous and somewhat over-written review-article on 'The Past and Present of Toryism' which described how the Tory shrinks from generalization "as from a guilty thing" because "taken in bulk, the Right have a horror of ideas".

In those happy days, your contributor could describe the Right as a political grouping which "lives by repeated inculcation of [twentieth-, not nineteenth-century] Liberal ideas", and whose policies were best seen as stemming, not exclusively from any linear Tory tradition, but from its leaders' responsiveness to "the existence of a large . . . bloc in the middle, those notorious pendulum-swingers". It seems, then, that in those days you inclined towards Professor Vincent rather than Mr Bradley.

Interestingly enough, so also did that Conservative elder statesman and former prime minister, A. J. Balfour. His biographer, Blanche Dugdale, tried to follow up your review-article by asking him to define Tory principles. Balfour doubted whether this was "a profitable speculation", and tried to palm her off with "the principles of common sense to do

what seems to be the right thing in a given case". She pressed him further, asking by what general principle the Tory's judgment can be guided. Balfour chose to reply by questioning his questioner: "Aren't you making judgment needlessly complicated by that question?" Enough said.

BRIAN HARRISON
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Reading on Horseback

Sir, - Russell Davies, reviewing Italo Calvino's *If on a winter's night a traveller* (July 10), quotes the author as writing "nobody ever thought of reading on horseback". The reviewer remarks that "Calvino can't resist obliging the reader to picture some fantastical option".

John Wesley habitually read on horseback. He rode many thousands of miles and read many hundreds of books, probably more than any other man in England.

RICHARD LEIGHTON GREENE.
The Graduates Club, PO Box 1875, New Haven, Connecticut 06508.

John Donne

Sir, - It is evident, from his review of John Carey's book on John Donne (June 12), that Christopher Hill is more at home among the Puritans of the seventeenth century than the Recusants of the sixteenth. To call the Jesuits of the Elizabethan age "underground immigrant conspirators", who insisted "on stirring up trouble, on becoming martyrs themselves and involving traditional English Catholics in their fate", and to imply a comparison between them and the terrorists of today, may perhaps reflect the viewpoint of John Donne himself, especially at the time of his composing *Pseudo-Martyr* and *Ignatius His Conclave*. But few histo-

rians, I suppose, would call his judgment a balanced one; and in any case Dr Hill is here speaking not for Donne but for himself. Apparently, he has no more affection for the Jesuits than Donne came to have. Of course, tastes may differ; but surely truth and justice may also have a say in the matter. The viewpoint of Donne is, as Dr Hill admits, largely coloured by the writings of the "apellant" priests who were the deliberate agents in the years 1601-03 of "the English government's carefully calculated policy of splitting the Catholics and isolating the Jesuits". If the Jesuits had indeed been the conspirators and terrorists of Dr Hill's imagination, the English government might have been content to let an explosive situation develop by itself; but they knew, far better than Dr Hill, that the situation had to be made explosive by means of a "carefully calculated policy" of disseminating half-truths, lies and slanders. One doesn't have to read through many of these appellants' writings to discover that here is a group of men, acting in concert, with an axe to grind; and the ownership of the axe becomes clear when we realize that their books were all published under false imprint by government printers. In all fairness, then, it seems to me necessary, as a means of understanding not only Donne's viewpoint but also the truth of the matter (so far as this may be ascertained), to persevere not only the writings of the appellants but also the reasoned replies of Father Persons, as well as such general descriptions of the difficult situation of English Catholics as William Allen's *Defence of English Catholics* and Robert Southwell's *Humble Supplication*. Here at least we find the Jesuits of that time presented in a different, more humane light; and here we recognize that their Catholicism was not after all so different from what Dr Hill calls "the Catholicism of More the humanist intellectual".

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Fifty years on . . .

The TLS of August 14 1931 carried a review of W. MacNeile Dixon's *The Englishman*.

This volume is based on a series of lectures - the first of the Northcliffe foundation - which were delivered before students of University College, London, in the autumn of 1929. They preserve, as Professor Dixon explains, a good deal of the unstudied conversational manner of the lecture-room. A professor today does not presume on the docility of his audience; his tone is apt to be rather that of the flatterer than the teacher; as much taste and knowledge as possible must be insinuated into the minds of an august gathering which has constituted itself his judge. It will certainly judge him unfavourably unless he circumvents and captures its attention. These pages, then, are not only a little conversational, but a little rhetorical at times; yet they contain a comprehensive survey of a theme of the greatest interest and moment, and are worth reading.

The lectures are six in number: Shakespeare, as the most representative Englishman, has the last chapter to himself, the Bible another, as the greatest single influence on the formation and sustenance of the national idiosyncrasy; these are led up to in a series of descriptive meditations which gradually come to closer grips with the subject - the English character, the English genius, the English people, the English soul.

We begin, as it were, with appearances, and have to acknowledge frankly that these are in many ways unattractive; we then pass to a consideration of the positive faculty underlying the negative or unprepossessing surfaces, to find that what the Englishman craves most for is to be a man: "I would not assert," said Eckermann, "that the young English-

Conan Doyle

Sir, - In the last paragraph of "The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle", according to the Hodder and Stoughton 1940 reprint of the 1916 edition and the selection *Sherlock Holmes Investigates* of Murray (1972), Conan Doyle wrote: "I suppose that I am committing a felony, or a slip for 'compounding'?" The Penguin edition of 1981 has "committing".

The problem is not as simple as it looks. It involves Doyle's calligraphy (is the first T shortened so that it looks like u?), a legal question (Holmes's allowing a felon to escape itself a felony?), and a point of English law (one compounds a felony when one condones an offence, but what one commits is a crime, and one is guilty of a felony when that crime falls into a certain category).

I believe that Doyle, momentarily misled by the other legal phrase of *committing a death-sentence*, wrote *committing*, and that readers, including myself in earlier readings, have not noticed the slip for the same reason.

Could someone tell us what is in the first edition (1892)?

D. B. GREGOR.
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'Aberration of Starlight'

Sir, - David Lodge, in his review of Gilbert Sorrentino's *Aberration of Starlight* (July 10) refers to the setting of the novel as "Long Island", whereas, in the American edition it is clearly rural New Jersey. I make up my mind that the author had in mind a place where he had been, but the book makes clear, at least in 1939, people did.

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Explorations of intensity

By Stephen Medcalf

C. IT. SISON Editor:
Philip Mairet: Autobiographical and Other Papers
266pp. Carcanet. £7.95.
0 85635 326 4

C. H. Sison has so arranged the papers of Philip Mairet that they seem to culminate in one image, in a letter from T. S. Eliot to Mairet of 1955, the image of "a moment at night" on the ocean crossing from Liverpool to Montreal "when the wind strikes with a peculiar chill, the still of a wind coming from a very dead land". It is an image, "the still dead breath of the Arctic Current", which Eliot had used in *The Rock* for the darkness with which men's best efforts towards good are surrounded, and once one knows that, it never seems far away from the two much greater poems which Mairet published in his *New English Weekly*: *East Coker* and *The Dry Salvages*.

When he wrote the letter, I suppose Eliot also had in mind Plato's lovely image for the grace which works of art in the Republic should possess, "like a wind from excellent places bringing health": in writing to Mairet, he gives it both a quality of warning, against something disturbing, a lack of humility or of charity in what Eliot himself calls the "extremely subtle and highly developed" Zen psychology of Dr Hubert Be-

mont, and a quality of personal insight. For Mairet had already written to Browder confessing a "sudden and unexpected loss of being associated with" his psychology, together with "the conviction of a great and important truth". Eliot had in fact put his finger on the strange weakness that seems to have lain at Mairet's heart most of his life, and perhaps gone some way to delivering him from it.

For Philip Mairet, a man of singularly penetrating intelligence, of a roving knowledge that recalls Coleridge, and of a wisdom that seems to have continued deepening until his death in his eighty-ninth year, nevertheless comes before us in the autobiographical part of his papers as a fairly familiar figure, particularly of his generation - the craftsman and book-writer in which Mairet seems to have been lost in the vast tides of the industrial and urban revolutions, looking with a kind of distinguished oddity for orientation.

In his always appropriately excellent prose, thoughtful and shot through with vivid visual detail, we follow him through design of architecture, furniture, jewellery, stained glass (at Chipping Camden with the Guild of Handicraft and elsewhere), as orderly in the Red Cross, farm labourer with the Ditching Community, missionary for the ideas of a Salvadorian, conscientious objector practising spiritual exercises in solitary confinement, actor at the Old Vic, and interpreter of Adler, until he arrives finally at the editorship of *The New English Weekly*. And one impression one can take from this book is of how powerless is the most

luminous intelligence or abstract thought by itself. With all his capacities, Mairet is continually looking for a spiritual leader to give him the meaning he never trusts himself to find. His wife, the weaver Edith Mary Partridge, Patrick Gaudes, the sociologist, Maud Ruyden, Dmitri Mitrović, the Serbian, ex-revolutionist who believed that he might have stopped the assassination at Sarajevo and spent the rest of his life working out his sense of missed opportunity, at the expense of his disciples, in schemes to redeem the world, Adler, Orage, Eliot, Bennett - all in turn fulfil this role for him.

One would like to know how far Eliot's self-deprecatory wisdom gave Mairet his final resting place. For the two most remarkable pieces in this book, writings in which Mairet seems profoundly to resolve the weaknesses he had found in society and in himself, both have some association with Eliot.

The first of these, *A Civilization of Techniques*, is hard to praise too much for the insight and prescience with which Mairet in 1945 surveys the problems of a social order shaped to make the fullest use of natural energy. Mitrović, with a kind of inverse wisdom that seems characteristic of him, had bullied Mairet for writing piece in the book, Mairet's description of the modern world, and in 1972 he interprets it with breathtaking intellectual excitement as a "little death". It gives one a queerly reassuring frisson to know that Eliot had foretold what would happen in comic verse:

Mr Philip Mairet
Crossed the Styx in a heret,
Explaining to Charon
"I must keep my hair on".
Anyone who knew Mairet will bear witness how accurately this brings him back, physically and spiritually. And the image of a river plays a large part in his recollections of what happened - a river of Death, or a river of the love of Christ - and here as elsewhere the gift for visual detail which appears in his autobiography deepens into the visionary and symbolic. Perhaps it was the set of images of the sea and the river that Mairet and Eliot most deeply shared; and it is not surprising that the clerical on the river of death should be so present. For in his final personal crisis and triumph Mairet fulfilled the advice of *East Coker*: "Give men ought to be explored" and found himself moving through the vast waters "into another intensity". With, in a traditional but Eliotic phrase, the "grace of tears". The reconciliation with death that he brought back deserves to be widely known. He remarks with approval that his master Adler "didn't want to be a writer" because "every fresh spasm of universal human understanding has to be stuck out between human beings conversing on these things man-to-man". It is perhaps partly the advantage of the variety and fragmentariness of these papers, though in fact much more the result of their undoubted good writing, that one feels oneself in contact with Mairet in just this illuminating way.

O'Casey's *Autobiographies* starts with a massive sentence, arranged in eight paragraphs, that offers a cunningly varied setting for an account of his mother's birth-pains. It ends with a simple "Hurrah!" This is an obvious indication of the work's stylistic range and varying engagement, and it would be a dull reader who did not sense a kinship with works by Cervantes, Robbeis, Shakespeare, Dickens and Joyce, and recognize its more than local and topical importance. Its formal originality could be exemplified from almost any page; for once in our cultural history, a dramatist has turned to narrative, description and fantasy, using all his technical skills and instincts. Only a greatly gifted case will write appropriately about this giant work, and only after long preparation.

With a last Hurrah

By John Russell Brown

SEAN O'CASEY:
Autobiographies
Volume 1
I Knock at the Door
Pictures in the Hallway
Drums under the Windows
0 333 28451 8
666pp.
Volume 2
Inishfallen, Fare Thee Well
Rise and Crown
Sunset and Evening Star
0 333 28452 5
689pp. Macmillan. £15 each volume.

ROBERT G. LOWERY (Editor):
Essays on Sean O'Casey's Autobiographies
249pp. Macmillan. £15.
0 333 26841 5

RONALD SCHLEIFER (Editor):
The Genres of the Irish Literary Revival
193pp. Dublin: Wolfhound Press. £9.
0 905473 59 0

After a series of convenient paperbacks, Sean O'Casey's *Autobiographies* comes to the public at last in two handsome, well printed and spacious volumes, rounded off with a careful index and brief chronology by J. C. Trewin. They are a pleasure to read, especially at a slow pace over a month or more; the large volumes are unusually easy to handle and O'Casey is resilient, informative, entertaining, provocative, wonderfully stubborn and undeniably inventive.

From the same publishers at the same time is the first book-length critical assessment of the *Autobiographies*. This takes the form of a collection of overlapping, lumbering and fitfully illuminating studies contributed by a tight huddle of scholars, each one finely specialized as an O'Casey commentator. There is some justice in this, for a full understanding of O'Casey's achievement is not easily gained by any one reader, and O'Casey himself enjoyed multiplying almost any idea. He called his hero John, Johnny and Sean, and he gave him two birth-dates. The life-story was first planned as one volume and then three, then four and, finally, six: it is published as *Autobiographies* in the UK and as *Reflections Upon the Mirror* in the

US. Moreover, O'Casey assembled glorious catalogues of elaborate names and delighted in quotations, misquotations and stylistic borrowings from the large number of books he had studied, the songs he had sung and the speeches he had heard in the many years before he wrote his first play and throughout his long life.

Essays on Sean O'Casey's *Autobiographies*, edited by Robert G. Lowery, is at its best an incidental commentary and informative companion volume. The first of ten chapters tells the story of how the six volumes were written, and this is amplified in the seventh chapter, in the course of three chapters, three writers consider the history of "Comrades" from *Inishfallen, Fare Thee Well* (Book IV); they note its "structural similarity to a two-part fugue", its irony, "cinematographic" form and "psychological analysis".

Deldre Henchy contributes twenty-two densely-written pages on "Dublin in the Age of O'Casey: 1880-1910" and follows these with sixty-two careful and elaborating footnotes. David Krause writes on "Fabrications and Epiphanies", distinguishing O'Casey from James Joyce, as a "word-painter" compared with "word-poet". Bernard Benstock considers "O'Casey as Wordsmith", chasing triple puns and elucidating old words and new words; here the audacity, playfulness and truculence of the *Autobiographies* receives some presentation, and further distinctions are made, between Joyce and O'Casey.

In the absence of any other book, this collection of essays can be recommended. But ten different minds cannot grapple satisfactorily with this comic, epic, poetic masterpiece, this prose work on which a self-educated, politically conscious, deeply experienced, grandly imaginative dramatist spent fifteen years of his life and half a million words, the experimental and adventurous narrative in which the author wrestled, in jest and in earnest, with form and language, with his past and present, his many friends and adversaries, and his multiple sense of his own self.

A collaborative volume could have provided a wide spectrum of critical appraisal, but this does not. The contributors are all Irish specialists, six of them editors or consultants of the *Sean O'Casey Review*. They are too close to their subject (and to each other) to benefit from a col-

laborative venture: a few quotations from Roy Pascal's *Design and Truth in Autobiography*, which has a European perspective, are reminders of the great advantages of standing back to compare. Besides the tone of the volume is too often that of a specialist seminar: "What follows will attempt to substantiate and to validate, in a focal way, the foregoing pronouncements and assumptions . . .". The most readable chapter is the Joker in the pack, an account of O'Casey's relationship with G. B. Shaw, liberally supplied with quotations from their correspondence.

Ideas surface briefly in this collection of short studies, never to be developed. So the Celtic tradition of the *aid*, "the genre of the dream vision or poem of revelation", is mentioned once only. Contributors refer to Yeats, Synge, Lady Greg-

ory, Wilde, Joyce for their own immediate purposes, but no chapter gives an adequate impression of O'Casey's place in "the finest literary movement of our century" as it is called by Ronald Schleifer in his introduction to *The Genres of the Irish Literary Revival*. Professor Schleifer's volume is collaborative, too, but more frankly so. He has grouped together independent studies of some genres and of eight individual writers - Yeats, Synge, Joyce, George Moore, O'Casey, O'Flaherty, Kavanagh and Kinsella. The vitality of Irish theatre is well represented in a further chapter, whereas it is barely glimpsed in Robert Lowery's book on O'Casey. Several of Schleifer's contributors - Hugh Kenner and Jackson L. Cope especially - present their chosen writers in a wide perspective and as part of a long development.

Hoping without believing

By Patrick McCarthy

CLAUDE ROY:
Les Chercheurs de Dieu
Paris: Gallimard.

Claude Roy's *Les Chercheurs de Dieu* is best read as an appendix to his memoirs. In the introduction he writes: "I tried to explain in my three-volume, autobiographical essay - *Not Je, Nous and Some more* - how I abandoned one faith after another". In his youth a Catholic and a supporter of the Action Française, Roy leapt from Maurras to Marx and joined the Parti Communiste. Francis during the Resistance. He remained a member until the late 1950s, agonized over Khrushchev's revelations and left the party to become an ex-communist. Since ex-communists continue, like lapsed Catholics, to be religious men, Roy's memoirs read like a long act of confession - I believed in Stalin, *mea culpa*.

The value of these memoirs lies, however, in his historical imagination. The quest for gods who invariably failed was widespread among his generation and Roy, who

blended autobiography with political and literary history, succeeded in recreating the period from the mid-1930s to 1960. His memoirs are an essential source for anyone who wishes to understand these years. In *Les Chercheurs de Dieu* he deals more directly with the problem of belief and this philosophical essay will probably appeal only to people who already know and enjoyed his earlier books and who recognize behind the analysis of Lenin or Khrushchev Roy's personal dilemma.

Religions, he tells us, start as heresies and turn into orthodoxies. Political religions attain God inside history and have to realize their heaven on this earth, so their followers become tyrants like Stalin, who massacred the Russian peasants because, according to the gospel of Saint Karl they should not really be there.

None of this is new, but Roy does write vividly about recent illuiminists. He has dug up a glorious quote from the French Moolists: "Blessed are the poor in spirit because they shall inherit the proletarian revolution". Post-1968 France saw a rebirth, both of neo-Marxism and left-wing Catholicism. The jaundiced Roy, particularly sarcastic about Maurice Clavel, who described the horrors of May '68 as the legions of the exter-

minating angel come to destroy capitalist France and the anti-Christ De Gaulle.

Yet after three hundred pages of argument he cannot rid himself of the need to believe. He admires "those who can hope without believing and act without turning their action into an absolute". Politically he defends the social democrats who are so despised by the manicheans of the PCF. Yet he seems to feel that humans are born to construct religions; perhaps this is the real original sin. Roy himself may be slipping back towards non-Marxist gods. Religious religions are better, he tells us, than political religions because they do not situate God within history. Theirs is a "faith which doubts", they are not manichean and their belief gives a shape to absurdity without banishing it.

One recognizes here a brand of Catholicism which grew out of the Second World War. The concentration-camps made it impossible to believe in a beneficent divine order but man's awareness of his flawed condition was the sign of a blinder, remote God. The need to believe was itself a hint that, despite Dachau or Buchenwald, such a God might exist. Roy is nowadays too disenchanted to believe firmly in this God but at least He is better than Stalin.

Among this week's contributors

MICHAEL BIDOISS is Professor of History at the University of Reading. His most recent books are *The Age of the Masses*, 1977, and *Images of Race*, 1979.

DAVID BRAUNING's *Haciendas and Ranchos in the Mexican Yucatán, 1700-1860* was published last year.

JULIA BOGGS is the author of *Night Visitors: The Rise and Fall of the English Ghost Story*, 1977.

ANITA BOOKNER's most recent books are *Jacques Louis David* and the novel, *A Story in Life*, both 1981. P. N. BOOKS is the Director of Studies in History at Downing College, Cambridge.

RAYMOND COBE is Warden of St Anthony's College, Oxford. His books include *The Spanish Civil War*, 1971, and *España de la democracia a la democracia*, 1979.

PAUL CADOTDGE is a Fellow of Clare College, Cambridge.

STEPHEN CLARK's books include *Aristotle's Man*, 1975, and *The Moral Status of Animals*, 1977.

RICHARD COBE is Professor of Modern History at the University of Oxford. His recent books include *Death in Paris 1795-1801*, 1978, and *Prisoners*, 1979.

ANTI-CHRIST IN THE MIDDLE AGES

A Study of Medieval Apocalypticism, Art, & Literature

by Richard K. Emmerson

This book was advertised in error as published by University of Washington Press. It is published by Manchester University Press and is available at £22.50.

RICHARD COMAS is editor of the British Film Institute's *Monthly Film Bulletin*.

GEORGE CRAIG is Reader in French at the University of Sussex.

PATRICIA COAGIO's critical study, *The Lady Investigators: Women Detectives and Spies in Fiction*, a collaboration with Mary Cadogan, was published earlier this year.

PATRICIA CRONE's books include *Sloven on Horses: The Evolution of the Muslim Policy*, 1980.

TOM DISCH's most recent collection of poems *ABCDEFGHIJKLMNPOQRSTUVWXYZ* was published earlier this year.

IAN FLETCHER is the editor of *Decadence and the 1890s*, 1979.

MIRIAM GRIFFIN is a Fellow of Somerville College, Oxford. She is the author of *Seneca: A Philosopher in Politics*, 1976.

JONATHAN HARRISON is Professor of Philosophy of the University of Nottingham.

PATRICK MCCARTHY is the author of *Celtic*, 1978.

LUCY MAIR's books include *The New Africa*, 1967, and *Witchcraft*, 1969.

YAKOV MALKIEL is the editor of *Romance Philology*.

STEPHEN MEDCALF is a lecturer in English at the University of Sussex.

EDWIN MORGAN is Titular Professor of English at the University of Glasgow.

DAVID PAINPAIN is assistant lecturer in the Philosophy of Science at the University of Cambridge. His books include *For Science in the Social Sciences*, 1978, and *Theory and Meaning*, 1980.

S. N. PLACC's latest translation is of Tankred Dorst's *Merlin*.

MENNA PRESTWICH is a Fellow of St Hilda's College, Oxford.

CHRISTOPHER REID's collection of poems, *Arcadia*, was published in 1979.

ROBIN ROBINS has edited the forthcoming Oxford English Text of Sir Thomas Browne's *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*.

JOHN RUSSELL BROWN is Professor of English at the University of Sussex and Associate Director of the National Theatre.

CLIVE SINCLAIR's collection of stories *Hearts of Gold* was published in 1980. His *The Brothers Suger*, a study of Isaac Bashevis and Israel Joshua Singer will be published next year.

STUART SUTHERLAND is Professor of Experimental Psychology at the University of Sussex.

HUOH TINKER is Professor of Politics at the University of Lancaster. His books include *Race, Conflict and the International Order: From Empire to United Nations*, 1977.

E. S. TURNER's most recent book is *Dear Old Blighty*, 1980.

CLIVE WILMER's collection of poems, *The Dwelling Place*, was published in 1977.

J. K. WINO is Director of the Medical Research Council's Social Psychiatry Unit at the Institute of Psychiatry, London. He is the author of *Reasoning About Madness*, 1978.

BARBARA WRIGHT has translated many books from French, including works by Raymond Queneau and Robert Pinget.

Harmony of the highest

By Raymond Carr

JUAN LÓPEZ-MORILLAS

The Krausist Movement and Ideological Change in Spain, 1854-1874
Translated by Frances M. López-Morillas
152pp. Cambridge University Press, £17.50.
0 521 23256 2

Juan López Morillas's book, first published in Spanish in 1950, is a sympathetic and scholarly explanation of what must, at first sight, appear one of the most freakish episodes in the intellectual history of Western Europe: the astonishing influence in Spain, between 1857 and the 1870s, of an obscure German philosopher, C.J. Krause (1781-1832). Krausism influenced deeply the philosophical, religious and political ideas of a whole generation of Spanish liberals. Not was it merely an intellectual movement. It represented a life-style, reflected in sobriety and the cultivation of taciturnity; a protest against the circumstantial triviality of a society sunk in the outward commonplaces of a mindless Catholicism, against the backwardness of a nation without professors, libraries or laboratories. For two decades the philosophy of what, to its billions, Catholic adversaries, was a heretical sect adopted by the gaudy of university patronage for the benefit of its followers — supplied the Spanish bourgeoisie with an ethic that underwrote the Revolution of 1868 which drove that incarnation of empty piety — Queen Isabella II — from her throne, a revolution which culminated in the anarchy of the First Republic of 1873.

There is a heroic attempt, in the early chapters of this book, to expound the misty waffle of the master who claimed to be the only true interpreter of Kinn. Krause's "harmonic rationalism" saw men engaged over history, by the exercise of reason, in the discovery of the ultimate harmony of the universe; the progressive realization of the unity of all things in God was the supreme aspiration of the human individual. In its optimism Krausism denied evil; it was partial blindness, an illusory barrier to the unfolding of the great design. This was an ideal faith for an

elite that sought to rescue a society from spiritual anarchy. Equipped with this bizarre intellectual apparatus the Krausists became "the first to immerse the Spanish mind in modern rationalism".

Krausism was imported into Spain by Professor Sanz del Río but whom Krause was the only philosopher and on whose works he had meditated for ten years in solitude after his return from Germany. Very few of his followers understood what this austere professor was talking about, either in his famous first lecture in 1857 or in his later works. That did not matter. Krausism, above all, provided a standard to condemn the sordidness of Isabella Spain, a counter-religion to measure the shortcomings of official Catholicism. He had chosen Krause's system, Sanz del Río confessed, "according to the little I was able to understand of it", because it was the system "most susceptible to practical application". It was the ethics rather than the metaphysics of Krausism that won it converts.

The interest of this book lies, therefore, in its explanation of the resonance of Krausism in the intellectual and political life of Spain. A cynic might suggest that the explanation of Sanz del Río's success as a proselytizer was that he provides an early exemplar of a familiar modern academic phenomenon: by taking youth seriously one can ensnare silly ideas with a popularity undesired by their intrinsic worth; or more seriously, that the conventional wisdom of traditional Spanish Catholicism, given a new edge by the Neo-Catholicism, was, by the 1850s, so rebarbative, so unprogressive, that anything which altered a vision of rotundity and of progress — and Krausism with its unfolding of the idea of humanity by reason did that — was preferable. Krausism corresponded, López Morillas points out, with the most dismal period of Spanish literature.

It is, perhaps, the eclipse of Liberal Catholicism — the apogee of Krausism coincided with the years of the Syllabus of Errors and the denunciation of Papal infallibility — that explains the success of Krausism as a surrogate religion, a sort of Spanish Unitarianism. There was no middle of the road in Spain's religious consciousness: as Menéndez Pelayo — direct enemy of the Krausists and of modernism in general, the polymath

who was to become the intellectual hero of Francoist National Catholicism — pointed out, the only alternative to Catholicism was "brutal indifference". The Krausists were too serious-minded to lapse into indifference.

The anguish of the priest Fernando de Castro — a Unitarian before his time — found a resting place in Krause's "rational" religiosity. Catholics sensed the threat: for Krausists, though they prudently avoided a frontal attack on Catholicism, Christianity was but one step in the evolution of humanity towards a religion without revelation or dogma. To Giner, the gentle founder of the Free Institute of Education which was to carry forward to the next generation the essential ethical concern of Krausism, faith which was to be regarded by the National Catholicism that came out of the Civil War, as the seed-bed of the liberalism that had made that war necessary to save the eternal values of Catholic Spain, "recognition of God and his absolute properties is the only religion worthy of humanity".

It was the ethical seriousness of Krausism, as López Morillas explains in a most perceptive section of a most perceptive book, which led its Spanish followers to reject France and to love Germany. Spanish intellectuals resented the cultural chauvinism of the French. Above all, with a popularity undesired by their intrinsic worth; or more seriously, that the conventional wisdom of traditional Spanish Catholicism, given a new edge by the Neo-Catholicism, was, by the 1850s, so rebarbative, so unprogressive, that anything which altered a vision of rotundity and of progress — and Krausism with its unfolding of the idea of humanity by reason did that — was preferable. Krausism corresponded, López Morillas points out, with the most dismal period of Spanish literature.

Krausism, already to a certain extent weakened by the débâcle of the Liberal revolution of 1868, ceased as a major influence, not so much because its leaders were harassed by a reactionary monarchist Restoration in 1875, as because its limitations were exposed. Rather than persecuted out of existence it went out of fashion, supplanted by the positivism it abhorred as a product of French intellectuals, exhibitionists and ex-



"Woman in a Blue Hat", a charcoal drawing by Picasso circa 1901; from the catalogue to Princeton Alumni Collections: Works on Paper (see the picture and caption on the cover of this issue for details).

troverts who lacked "human depth". Indeed, historians who end to judge the Restoration monarchy by the electoral jockeying which supported its political system, would do well to note López Morillas's defence of the Restoration as an open, tolerant society. If, for a short period, Krausist professors lost their chairs they could speak their minds in the Ateneo club and in peripatetic open to all opinions. Dismissed by one, among others, as an aspect of sterile restorationist conservatism, the Restoration turns out to be something of an intellectual *blatant*. Gregorio Marañón, in despair after the Civil War, wrote that the "great sorrow of these present days" allowed one to look back on the Restoration monarchy — a

constitutional monarchy that went down in 1923 before the coup d'état of a "patriotic" and ambitious general fortified by the caustic criticism of intellectuals like Ortega y Gasset — as almost a second Golden Age. The Krausists themselves had no love for what Azorín was to call "the splendid sixty years of the Alfonso restoration". Azorín, a Krausist *par excellence*, wanted a Republic "that is at once reformist and conservative". This arrived in 1931 only to be destroyed by the forces of authoritarian Catholicism that could not and never will tolerate the open society, rational and humane, that was the Krausist ideal. Professor López Morillas has written a splendid tribute to that ideal.

realism. When dealing with this period, Geary explains particularly well the failure of the Left to appreciate early enough the character and extent of the Fascist menace. Yet his account of the German case would have been strengthened had he supplemented his remarks about the workers' considerable resistance to Nazism up to 1933 with a fuller summary of the debate on the nature and limits of their quiescence thereafter.

Granted that both the Socialist and the Communist versions of European labour agitation became more institutionalized and bureaucratized after 1917, it is scarcely surprising that towards the end of his book the author has found it harder to sustain his professed emphasis upon the discussion of protest at the grass-roots level. Still, overall, Dr Geary's demotic approach to this story of "division and diversity" helps to enhance the distinctive quality of an argument that is everywhere both subtle and forceful. The liveliness of the whole analysis is such that readers will probably be annoyed, however unjustifiably, to discover how very rigidly he has stuck to the limitation implied by his terminal date. He makes no more than passing, but intriguing, reference to the fact that "in many ways the experiences of Fascism, the Second World War and then the Cold War changed the face of labour protest". If, as he claims, this is indeed another story, then the present account gives us every reason to hope that on some other occasion he will turn his talents to telling it.

oppression, the Russian proletariat was deprived of any effective alternative to revolutionary forms of protest, while conversely the relatively liberal institutions of late nineteenth-century Britain helped to stamp an overwhelmingly reformist mark on the country's working-class politics. At the same time, the intermediate constitutional position of the Wilhelmian Reich contributed to leaving German labour outstandingly confused about its political targets and tactics.

Such are some of the leading themes pursued through a loosely chronological survey, covering three broad spans. Down to 1890, Geary's attention centres upon the emergence of organized protest, especially within the context of progressive industrialization. His initially crude model of distinction between "pre-industrial", "early industrial", and "modern industrial" manifestations of unrest is eventually employed with a rewarding delicacy that avoids any notion of rigid sequential necessity. It does, however, convey some sense of transition, first, from one kind of sporadic direct action (typified by the eighteenth-century food riot) to another, often characterized by its resistance to the new industrialism (classically expressed in Luddite machine-breaking), and thence to a more thoroughly organized and less immediately violent deployment of labouring strength (exemplified in trade union activity and strike tactics) aimed at humanizing rather than abolishing the conditions of industrial society.

The author concedes that up until the First World War only a minority of workers ever engaged in such protest, but equally he emphasizes how, over the generation before 1914, Europe witnessed a marked increase in union membership and strikes, as well as a growth of political parties drawing strength from unresolved labour discontent. The best thing in this section is Geary's assessment of why, none the less, the bulk of European workers found themselves after Sarajevo entering so enthusiastically upon a war in which national rather than class interests appeared paramount. He sketches with great fairness the case which others have made out for a widespread "embourgeoisement" and "deradicalization" within the ranks of labour around this epoch, only to proceed all the more skillfully to its severe qualification or, in his own terms, to its actual dismissal.

According to this analysis, the Great War was significant in removing many of the obstacles that had previously hindered the actual expression of a growing inclination towards radical protest. Yet the conflict was additionally important in creating or accentuating certain tensions which, during the final years covered by this study, culminated in "the tragic division of the organized labour movement, a division which doomed it to ultimate failure in the inter-war years". In one sense, it was precisely the emergence of real revolutionary opportunities which worsened the split between supporters of reformist and more radical solutions, by turning hitherto theoretical alternatives into issues of urgent

Grumbles among the grass roots

By Michael Biddiss

DICK GEARY:

European Labour Protest 1848-1939
195pp. Croom Helm, £11.95.
0 85664 621 0

At the opening of this volume Dick Geary refers to "the infant state of labour history in most European countries". His own latest contribution to the subject's maturation provides not only a concise and admirably annotated survey of the growing body of monographic material available but also, more speculatively and challengingly, a framework of generalization about patterns of protest that later commentators will need to test and refine. This structure has its firmest foundations in Britain and France (where investigation into the conditions and attitudes of working people has developed further than elsewhere) and Germany. Geary's main research is centred on these areas but the comparative sweep of his book is enhanced by a good measure of reference to developments in Russia, as well as to aspects of Italian, Spanish, and Austrian experience. In each case the primary concern is not with the incessant wranglings of radical intellectuals, or indeed with the conduct of labour leadership, but rather with what can be learned of protest at the grass roots.

The clarity of Dr Geary's substantial historical account owes much to his early schematic presentation of the

complex variables to be considered. Among actual forms of protest, for instance, he refers not only to strikes but also to the subtly different threat of such action, as well as to absenteeism, alcoholism, emigration, and other diverse means by which the rate of production might be depressed. He warns against the acceptance of any simple pattern of correlation between unrest and poverty, and indeed highlights the tendency for organized resistance to have developed most readily among skilled workers who, relative to the poorer unskilled, possessed a less insecure bargaining position and hurt more to lose from the policies and caprices of employers. He insists on our need to study not only the varying size and conditions of factory units, but also the workers' domestic environment, not to appreciate overall that the way in which they reacted to pressures "was not a simple consequence of purely material concern but also a consequence of inherited expectations".

Geary further claims that comparison between the experience of various European countries is easier in regard to protest of a predominantly economic sort, directed against the employer, than to action of a more political kind, where industrial muscle was utilized with the aim of reforming or even revolutionizing the decision-making processes of the state. Much of the diversity here was imposed, to a sense, extraneously by the sheer variety of governmental attitudes (and also often of middle-class opinion) regarding labour movements. Thus, through Tarist

Is there a crisis in Asian studies in this country? One might reply that they have always been in crisis. During the Second World War it was suddenly realized that there was no reserve of Japanese specialists to provide the kind of intelligence developed at Bletchley Park. For example, or even the elementary linguistic expertise needed by Allied army commanders trying to guess at the Japanese tactics. Philologists at the School of Oriental and African Studies, many themselves not Japanese experts, hastily mounted crash courses which inadequately filled the gap.

It was decided that this must not occur again, and before the war was cold, a commission headed by Lord Scarborough, former Governor of Bombay, successfully pressed for a massive investment in language posts at SOAS and some additional posts in the humanities. The Scarborough programme went through when Britain's imperial role still seemed assured, despite an impending departure from South Asia. When, at the start of the 1960s, Sir William Hayter was asked to follow up to Scarborough, amidst was gathering over the Empire. But Hayter's proposals were still premised on the concept of Britain having a world role to play. The Scarborough strategy had been based on the expansion of a central Asian and African programme in London. Hayter, by contrast, planned to extend Asian studies by opening up new centres at selected provincial universities. Also, the emphasis was now wholly upon the social sciences, to the openly expressed horror of traditional Orientalists.

The choice of new provincial centres often seemed little more than random. However, some attracted scholars of international eminence, and the work began. There was always the pull of London, where so many linguistic and other specialist sources are concentrated and where so many leading experts are based. Yet the attempt to transform the condition of Asian Studies from that of an exclusive and exotic lighthouse plant into an everyday part of the British university scene was certainly worth making.

The advance in Asian Studies in Britain during the thirty years down to 1980 was greater, probably, than in the previous three hundred. Heretofore, Dutch, German and French institutions were definitely more important than our own. They first developed Asian Studies as a systematic and integrated discipline; but now the contribution of British scholarship began to achieve something like academic parity. In sheer numbers, indeed, the British component was larger.

This period of consolidation within academic also saw the fading away of that previously dominant element, the scholar-militant, who as subject officer or consultant agent or resident at a princely court had provided the groundwork of British Asian Studies, especially as concerned the Middle

East and South Asia. With their departure from our shores, and the departure of a certain early youthful enthusiasm, and the inevitable were left. The few men who had spent thirty, forty or fifty years in some remote outpost of *unhappy* today's more-erect Asian is lucky if, out of forty years passed in specialized study, he can actually spend five years in the field.

If the 1950s and 1960s were decades of expansion, the 1970s became years of making time. In subtle ways, Asia began to go out of fashion. The horror and squalor of Vietnam and Kampuchea became a stark reminder of certain appalling consequences of Western intervention. India, once the beacon of Third World democracy, seemed at best to be holding on in the struggle for political and economic survival. Finally, that Brave New World, no longer appeared to have all the answers. The students of the 1960s believed they had so much to learn from Asia; now, for too often, they don't seem to want to know.

This might not be crucial — fashion comes and goes — were we not all threatened with a general crisis over university financing and policy on student entry. So far, there has been much talk of crisis, and very little actual impact upon campus activities. Maybe if Asian Studies maintain a low profile for a period they can weather the storm. But one has the uneasy feeling that today's dons, who have known nothing except easy expansion, will soon have to face up to real restrictions. When this time comes, surely the merely desirable should be before the essential — and not Asian Studies in the 1980s an optional extra?

This line of argument will be the easiest to develop because, coincidentally, a generation of Asian specialists will be retiring in the next five or ten years. The wartime soldiers who returned from SEAC and India and Middle East Command in the 1940s, and converted a temporary enthusiasm into an academic career, are now in their late fifties or early sixties. Soon it will be time to go. They have served their purpose — why replace them? SOAS will be specially vulnerable to this massive exodus in the 1980s. The 1990s will see the departure of some of the Hayter cohorts; why replace them? The future lies with business studies and marketing and accountancy, we are told. So far the most important institutions where Asian Studies are supported remain intact; but on the periphery the liquidation has begun.

However, we cannot just turn our back upon it all. Britain was an imperial power for three centuries, and Britons must be aware, whether because of guilt or pride or just happenstance, that they still have commitments in faraway places. One of the continuing taints of our time remains *Deum Achilles* (that is, how it is so) lost an empire but not found a role. We have to find a proper role for Asian Studies in the post-imperial present:

viewpoint

BY HUGH TINKER

When, inevitably, upward, of two million people, numbering in South Asia are inhabitants of the United Kingdom.

Perhaps the problem can be separated into two parts, one relating to advanced research and scholarship, the other to the dissemination of the subject within universities in general and thence into public awareness.

As part of the imperial legacy we possess superb collections of Asian materials. The British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum have examples of all kinds of art and literary works, and the records of Asian culture in general. The holdings of the Public Record Office include the documents of the colonial empire, and the India Office Records preserve the two hundred years' history of John Company and the Empire of India — an archive that takes in virtually the whole Indian Ocean region. The correspondence of British missionary societies tells much about the "modernization" or "Westernization" of the Orient.

While the shelves and drawers of the Royal Geographical Society and the Royal Commonwealth Society yield up unique accounts of Western exploration and penetration in Asia, as well as these public or semi-public institutions there also remain the private collections — some little more than loot, but some representing pioneering individual taste and scholarship. A chance visit to one of the great northern public schools recently was a revelation to me of how much orientalia is lying around in this instance hoarded long ago by far-flung old boys more or less unaccounted and uncatalogued.

It has been argued that these materials should be returned to the lands whence they came; certainly, the main justification for keeping them in Britain must be that they are freely accessible and freely in use. Increasingly, the users will be scholars from Asia, and this should be accepted and encouraged. Some playing out of British Asian scholarship is inevitable. It has always been true that the principal interpreters of the history and culture of China and Japan have been Chinese and Japanese; and the same is increasingly true of India. If for some other Asian countries the main centres of study are still outside the countries themselves — in the West, or the Soviet Union — then this colonial hangover should not be perpetuated.

If the principal British contribution to original scholarship in the future lies in providing the material for research, it is still desirable that there should be active British participation in work of original scholarship. It may be that this could best be fostered not in the traditional university structure but separately, in a small central research institute directly associated with the documentation centres as, in a modest way, the Historical Section of the India Office Records is already. This Asian Brookings (that is, how it is so) could be small. The choice of Fellows should not, as so often happens in Britain, be based on promise but on

performance. Fellowships might be given only to people of thirty years or over, preferably ones who had initially worked in an Asian milieu and proven their worth by some major contribution. This core of scholarship would be our guarantee of a significant British place in advanced Asian studies.

Of wider concern will be the question of Asia in the overall university context. Both in the Hayter-type centres and in the new departments at the new universities — most of which came too late for Hayter's bounty — there have been widespread developments in the humanities and social sciences. The Orientalists' insistence on laying a foundation of extensive language study has been little followed. Asian history, Asian politics, Asian social structures have been studied almost entirely via English-language sources. Superficial, we shall be told; but most undergraduate work today is equally superficial.

Experience tends to show that courses given an overtly regional label (History of China, Politics of South-East Asia) are more liable to fluctuate in student esteem than courses which consider Asian subjects within a functional context. This offers a clue to the successful integration of Asian "regional" studies into a broader academic framework. A wise historian (as is Acton?) said "Study problems, not periods". One must insist that specialists might be "Study problems, not places". This advice seems sound for university lecturers worried about their prospects in an increasingly unsympathetic environment. When asked, "What is your field?", instead of replying Kampuchea, or Iraq, or Tamilnadu, the Asian expert would identify his or her field as (for example) Revolution, Women in Society, or Peasant Movements. Someone will snort "Socialism"; but we must insist that these are subjects which the thoroughly respectable historian or the almost respectable political scientist might legitimately tackle.

But suppose we do struggle through the 1980s into a better time, and then discover that nobody of any significance has come into Asian Studies since the death of Mao Tse-tung; how will they cope in the twenty-first century? A hiatus of twenty years might not matter much in Tudor or Civil War studies (perhaps they would be all the better for it), but after such a gap Asian Studies would be hard-pressed to survive in Britain. Somehow, survive they must; for it will always be true: *ex oriente lux*.

One might hope that investigation of the chosen theme would be developed on a comparative basis, but this raises a problem. Most Asian specialists, having settled on a congenial area of study, deepen their understanding by becoming familiar with its principal language. For all but a gifted few, the acquisition of an Asian language represents considerable intellectual effort; but its possession distinguishes the genuine expert from the false one. Given which, how are Asianists to embrace the comparative approach I have recommended? For the acknowledged expert on Vietnam will have his experience challenged if he dares to make comparisons with Laos or Kampuchea?

Consideration of languages leads to a last thought regarding what may happen after the 1980s. The able graduate of the present day who is attracted by Asia will have to think, furiously before embarking on the long haul of postgraduate research involving commitment to serious language study. Supposing one does get down to that in Sinhalese or Pashto as a necessary tool for research, and supposing that after five years it becomes clear that one wishes to reward this laboriously acquired knowledge with an academic job: what then? The outlook for everyone starting postgraduate research today is hazy; only the most dedicated will take a chance on a future in Asian Studies.

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TLS

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From the peasants' point of view

By David Brading

JOHN VICTOR MURRA:
The Economic Organization of the Inca State
208pp. Greenwich, Conn: JAI Press.

For many years the study of pre-Columbian civilization in the New World was dominated by two main approaches. On the one hand, nationalist scholars, caught within an idiom of metaphor and comparison which went back to the sixteenth century, seized upon the impressive ruins and artefacts of Indian cultures as proof that their material achievements were equal to those of Ancient Rome and Greece. On the other hand, American anthropologists, influenced by their research into the social organization of the native tribes of the United States and Canada, insisted that the Aztecs and Incas were little more than the advanced cousins of the Iroquois and Sioux. Lewis Morgan, the founder of their school, insisted against Prescott that Moctezuma, far from being an emperor dwelling in a palace, was simply a war-chief squatting on the floor of a communal lodge.

The debate, of course, was an old one: it had flourished in the Enlightenment; its roots lay in the Renaissance. But even the most sceptical anthropologist had difficulty in explaining away an Empire which stretched from northern Argentina to the borders of Colombia. The problem was compounded by the challenge of the *Royal Commentaries of the Incas* (1609), a brilliant example of humanist history, whose author, the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, son of an Indian princess and a leading conquistador, depicted the rulers of the Andean Empire as enlightened Platonian Guardians who had brought civilization to the hitherto barbarous peoples of Peru. These children of the Sun – they were practical monotheists – regulated all aspects of life and property and maintained great warehouses from which their subjects could be clothed and fed.

Here then was the ideal welfare state, based, as Garcilaso was careful to note, on the dictates of natural law. Small wonder that the Enlightenment coupled the Incas with the Chinese as the great exemplars of societies achieving natural justice without the assistance of Christianity. The attraction of Garcilaso was further demonstrated not merely by later attempts to argue that More's *Utopia* was inspired by rumours of the Inca State mysteriously disseminated through the jungles, but, more important, by the publication of Louis Baudin's *The Socialist State of the Incas* (1928), a work deemed worthy of English translation during the Cold War. For Baudin simply turned Garcilaso on his head and asserted that the combination of village collectivism with the state socialism of the Incas created an intolerable despotism, that suppressed all individual initiative and liberty.

It was left to an American social anthropologist, albeit of Romanian extraction, to lay the ghost of Garcilaso. The break-through was achieved by asking new questions of well-known materials. Prevented by the State Department from undertaking field work in Peru (he had served in the Abraham Lincoln brigade in the Spanish Civil War), John V. Murra combed through the entire corpus of chronicles dealing with the Incas and, in particular, scrutinized Bernabé Cobo's *Historia del Nuevo Mundo*. But whereas most scholars followed both Garcilaso and Cobo in viewing the Empire from the standpoint of its capital Cuzco, Murra examined the economy from the perspective of the conquered communities, an approach suggested in part by his previous work on Ecuador. In any case, the publication in 1936 of the remarkable chronicle written by Huáman Poma de Ayala had already revealed the underlying antagonism between local chiefs and their Cuzco overlords.

In the second place, Murra was indebted to ethnographical work on African political systems, and especially to Max Gluckman's study of kingship among the Bechuanaland. He was also influenced by Karl Polanyi's seminar on archaic economies, where the en-

countered the concepts of reciprocity and redistribution, ideas later published in Polanyi's *Trade and Markets in Early Empires* (1957). Thus Murra belongs to that generation of questioning or disenchanted Marxists who sought to liberate the past from the burden of classical economics and the determinants of the marketplace.

The starting-point of his analysis is the sharp distinction drawn between the peasant community and the Inca State. Professor Murra argues that the *ayllu*, a group of households loosely related, aimed at self-sufficiency in provision of foodstuffs and clothing. Relations between households and between *ayllus* in a community were characterized by reciprocity, with labour supplied and exchanged for mutual or communal benefit. Similarly, if the peasantry had to offer labour service to the local lord, the *mita* in return was expected to cover the costs of their periodic ritual feasts. Thus the basic welfare function hitherto ascribed to the Inca State was in fact exercised by the peasant community in each locality. This argument rests on the premise that conquest by the Incas did not destroy provincial jurisdictions nor strip the peasantry of sufficient land for its necessities.

Unlike most great empires the world has known, the Incas did not exact tax or tribute from peoples they conquered; instead, they expropriated land and demanded labour service. Although Garcilaso described a tripartite system of land tenure, divided between the State, the temples of the Sun, and the communities, there is little evidence to suggest that these sections were equal in area. The seizure of land, however, was accompanied by substantial improvement in its exploitation since the Incas were largely responsible both for the diffusion of llama herds as far north as Ecuador, and for the extension of maize cultivation through additional construction of the terraces and irrigation channels necessary for the survival of this crop in the high valleys of the Andes. It was to cultivate these fields and to care for their herds that the Incas demanded

labour service from all householders. Even women were not exempt since they were required to spin and weave the wool from the State herds.

In addition to these local tasks, the Incas summoned considerable contingents to assist in the construction of the great fortresses and temples at Cuzco and elsewhere, to work in the gold and silver mines, to raise coca in plantations on the Andean slopes of the Anaxiozian forests and to travel down to Cochabamba for maize-growing. The peasantry also supplied manpower for the centennial series of frontier wars. This *corteo* was invariably levied on *ayllus* rather than on individuals and the family units of absent workers were covered by the community.

The produce obtained from Inca lands and herds was either despatched directly to Cuzco to maintain the Court, the Temples and the royal lineage, or else was deposited in provincial warehouses where strict account was kept by means of *quipus*, elaborate knotted strings. The purpose of these warehouses lies at the centre of the controversy over the nature of the Inca State. Murra follows Cobo and other chroniclers in accepting that all labour supplied to the Inca was remunerated in the form of food and occasionally cloth, dispensed from the warehouses. Similarly, the Court, the Temples of the Sun, and the specialized craftsmen such as metal-workers and weavers of fine cloth, were all maintained from the produce of State lands. Equally important, the *mita* was levied to carry on the wars at the frontier where fed, armed and clothed by the Emperor. The welfare function of the warehouses was thus marginal and only operated as a safety-net in times of great need or famine.

One poignant feature of the Empire was the existence of the famous Virgins of the Sun. Good-looking girls were selected from the provinces and enrolled in convents, where they were taught to weave the fine cloth worn by the Incas and their allies. At a certain age some were distributed as concubines, others became wives, and the

remainder stayed in the convents as nuns and weavers of cloth. Thus in the same way that the peasantry were remunerated in staple foodstuffs for their labour, the caste of Incas and leading *curacas* were rewarded with gifts of fine cloth, the produce of artisans, and, on occasion, with women.

Murra sets out his basic thesis in the following passage: "The Inca State functioned like a market: it absorbed the surplus production of a self-sufficient population and 'exchanged' it by feeding the royals, the army, and these on *corteo* as well as using a lot of it as grants and benefactions."

Unlike Meso-America, the Andean zone lacked a currency such as cacao beans and had no counterparts to the Aztec merchants who traded at long distance in luxury goods. Markets were local and dealt in direct barter of foodstuffs and other cheap produce. It was thus left to the State to effect all major exchange of luxury goods. Moreover, Murra points out in his introduction that subsequent to writing the book, he discovered colonial documents which enabled him to enunciate a theory of "vertical archipelagos." By this term he means the tendency of both *ayllus* and communities to acquire land at different ecological levels, despatching seasonal or at times permanent colonists to cultivate distant outlying areas, subject to common ownership, without necessarily controlling the intervening space. Thus the old kingdom of the *Inlayo* in modern Peru, to supplement the potato and llama, produce of its central habitat, acquired fields on the Amazonian slopes for coca and lands for maize and cotton in the coastal valleys of the Pacific. The purpose was self-sufficiency and its effect was to obviate any recourse to trade or market economy.

Although *The Economic Organization of the Inca State* was written as a doctoral thesis in 1955, its publication in 1981 is most welcome, since, although long familiar to scholars, it now becomes available for students and the general public. Certainly, the

Professor Murra has certainly de-lated the Garcilaso balloon and his brilliant elucidation of the organization of the Andean economy as seen from the perspective of the conquered peoples. Would he take it kindly if I were to suggest that he might now care to examine the Inca State at its centre in Cuzco and at the same time measure the impact of almost continuous warfare on that State?

does he pay much attention to markets outside the Greco-Roman world – such as Persia, which was still a major importer of frankincense in the sixth century, or India, which has continued to import it until today. There is no consolidated discussion of the question why, and for how long, the overland route from south Arabia to Syria survived the competition of the Red Sea route; and the numerous observations on the problem which are scattered throughout the book are based on the assumption that the overland route continued to be used into a period for which it is not attested. Most disappointingly, there is no attempt to document the decline of the Roman market, or to evaluate the role played in this by Christianity, economic contraction or changing life-styles on the Roman side; with some minor exceptions, no source later than the (possibly second-century) *Periplus* has been used.

The fact that the author is not a professional scholar is apparent in numerous ways, as he is: himself aware, and above all in his tendency to leave off the presentation of his arguments before all the relevant evidence has been brought to bear. Thus he argues that the ancient world originally got its cinnamon and cassia in the form of inferior products native to east Africa, which were later ousted by the genuine products of the Far East; and this would indeed make excellent sense of the literary evidence, both ancient and classical. But no attention is paid to the fact that "cinnamon" is widely assumed to be a Malay loan-word, nor are we told what the species in question might be: the botanical evidence would in fact appear to be solidly against this solution. On other topics he suffers from the disadvantage that Miller's article appeared too late for him to take it into account. Thus he disposes of many supposedly early attestations of frankincense, but

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Professor Murra has certainly de-lated the Garcilaso balloon and his brilliant elucidation of the organization of the Andean economy as seen from the perspective of the conquered peoples. Would he take it kindly if I were to suggest that he might now care to examine the Inca State at its centre in Cuzco and at the same time measure the impact of almost continuous warfare on that State?

does he pay much attention to markets outside the Greco-Roman world – such as Persia, which was still a major importer of frankincense in the sixth century, or India, which has continued to import it until today. There is no consolidated discussion of the question why, and for how long, the overland route from south Arabia to Syria survived the competition of the Red Sea route; and the numerous observations on the problem which are scattered throughout the book are based on the assumption that the overland route continued to be used into a period for which it is not attested. Most disappointingly, there is no attempt to document the decline of the Roman market, or to evaluate the role played in this by Christianity, economic contraction or changing life-styles on the Roman side; with some minor exceptions, no source later than the (possibly second-century) *Periplus* has been used.

The fact that the author is not a professional scholar is apparent in numerous ways, as he is: himself aware, and above all in his tendency to leave off the presentation of his arguments before all the relevant evidence has been brought to bear. Thus he argues that the ancient world originally got its cinnamon and cassia in the form of inferior products native to east Africa, which were later ousted by the genuine products of the Far East; and this would indeed make excellent sense of the literary evidence, both ancient and classical. But no attention is paid to the fact that "cinnamon" is widely assumed to be a Malay loan-word, nor are we told what the species in question might be: the botanical evidence would in fact appear to be solidly against this solution. On other topics he suffers from the disadvantage that Miller's article appeared too late for him to take it into account. Thus he disposes of many supposedly early attestations of frankincense, but

On behalf of somewhere better

By Nicholas Spoliar

ALWYN BERLAND:
Culture and Conduct in the Novels of Henry James
227pp. Cambridge University Press.
£17.50.
0 521 23343 7

SARAH B. DAUGHERTY:
The Literary Criticism of Henry James
232pp. Ohio University Press. £9.60.
0 8214 0440 7

Nearly forty years after the centenary of James's birth the flood of critical works about him shows no signs of lessening. Alwyn Berland's new study seeks to examine the novels in the light of a composite ideal, "civilisation-as-culture", which Berland postulates as the "major theme" of James's oeuvre. He seeks to support his somewhat sweeping claim with quotations from the preface to "The Lesson of the Master", and by reference to a tradition consisting of Ruskin, Arnold and Pater, who are seen as having sought in culture a structure of value and belief to replace lost religious certainties.

James, it is argued, was in the same boat and his definition of "operative irony" in his works becomes, for Berland, a description of the fiction itself. In his preface to "The Lesson of the Master" James describes operative irony as a campaign, of a sort, on behalf of something better, implying and projecting the "possible other case, the case rich and edifying where the actuality is pretentious and vain". If the "super-subtle" characters of the novels do not exist in the world as it really is, James implies, then so much the worse for the world. It is Berland's thesis that the "something better" of the preface consists of a sort of Arnoldian blend of aesthetic and moral good.

What he sees as James's central concern, his "search for and defence of civilisation as culture", suggests Ruskin as well as Arnold. The Europe and America of James's International Theme become Arnold's Hellenism and Hebraism; the dichotomy is described as being central to James and implies a Ruskinian ideal of a unified sensibility. Berland believes that James shared Ruskin's conviction that good art was produced by good men, and he quotes from the preface to *The Portrait of a Lady* in an attempt to prove it.

The flaws of Berland's book relate to his emphasis as much as to his thesis. Though he uses cultural difference to draw out his characters, James's overriding preoccupation is not in the end with "culture" but with consciousness. His interest in "civilisation" is essentially a concomitant of his characters' need of worlds to explore, and Europe, because it is more dramatic, offers deeper possibilities for the exploration of character than does America. As the preface to that novel makes clear, everything in *The Portrait of a Lady*, for example, is there for the sake of Isabel's development and interest. James's "possible other case" concerns characters, first, and only consequently society, and while he is indeed committed to certain cultural ideals these by no means constitute his "major theme".

Central to James's view of his characters is, of course, the moral aspect, and he does not, even in *The Golden Bowl*, a novel which Berland discusses, confuse the moral with the beautiful. The aesthetic is handled with great ambivalence throughout James, and his comment on the "perfect dependence of the moral sense of a work of art on the amount of felt life concerned in producing it" suggests in his context that he held good art to be produced not by good men but by sensitive ones – a different proposition. Ultimately the implication is that he saw the success of a work of art as the prerequisite of its morality. Berland asks whether "if, as Ruskin said, only good men produce good art, must

not the same thing be true of those who receive and live with it?" James's portrayal of Mrs Gereth, say, hardly supports this thesis, and a similar misapprehension concerning goodness and beauty is held by many Jamesian protagonists, from Clement Searle to Milly Theale.

Roderick Hudson's remark "I'm a Hellenist, not a Hebraist" and the description of Waymarsh in *The Ambassadors* as a "Hebrew prophet" support Berland's point about James's use of Arnoldian vocabulary, and show that James found in Arnold a suggestive and lasting source. But Berland cannot be right in using such Arnoldian terms as strictness and spontaneity of conscience to define what James meant by America and Europe. Spontaneity of conscience is not a habitual characteristic of James's Europeans, though they do sometimes, like Prince Amerigo, admit to lacking a conscience, a different matter. Spontaneity, a "moral spontaneity" – is in fact a word that James applies specifically to American women, naming as examples Clover Hooper (later Henry Adams's wife) and Minny Temple, James's cousin.

Much of Berland's discussion of the individual novels appears to be independent of the book's thesis about culture, and is done in a professional manner, though there is a tendency to "tell the story". His argument for the influence of *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* on "The Madonna of the Future" is shaky, since he is wrong about the dates the story was published in 1873, not 1875 as Berland suggests, and was written in 1872). It is anyway questionable to what extent James admired Pater; his description

of him in a letter as a faintly glowing "lambent matchbox" is surely an ironic reference to the famous phrase about the need to burn with a hard, quick flame. Nor can one discuss *Roderick Hudson*, as Berland tries to, under the heading of James's "first novel": it had been published serially in 1875, before being produced as a book in 1876, while *Watch and Ward* had been published in 1871, in *The Atlantic Monthly*.

Considering how much has been written on James, it is surprising that no one should have tackled the engrossing and important subject of his literary criticism, which produced such memorable remarks as those on Flaubert (a "pearl-diver, breathless in the thick element while he groped for the priceless word") and on Ibsen:

Well in the very front of the scene lunges, with extraordinary length of arm, the Ego against the Ego, and rocks, in a figure of passion, the soul against the soul – a spectacle, a movement, its definite as the relief of silhouettes in black paper or of Eskimo dogs in the snow.

Sarah Daugherty's attempt to fill this gap is seriously marred by her failure to discuss the prefaces to the New York Edition, an odd omission, since they represent the summit of James's critical work. Her reason for leaving them out – to have included them, she says, would have involved her in lengthy discussion of the novels – is a curious one, and could equally be applied to the essays that she does discuss. The omission is all the more unfortunate given that her treatment of the essays she does include is thorough, informative and suggestive, and a useful introduction

to James's views of his fellow-writers.

Flaubert's well-worn aphorism about James's mind being too fine to be violated by an idea can be misleading, suggesting as it does that James was isolated from contemporary intellectual currents. In part, the essays valuably correct such an impression, revealing where his intellectual kinship lay. Eliot's phrase, however, retains some force, for James, both as a critic and as a writer, is, in his own word, a "case", not to be easily categorized, and increasingly unrestrained by a priori ideas. By the beginning of the 1890s we find him talking about the need to have "no rule for literary production but that it shall have genuine life", and though this perhaps begs questions (about "genuine life"), the years after the publication of "The Art of Fiction" (1884) show him overturning previous critical assessments, upgrading Flaubert, Manns, Zola, Hawthorne, Whitman, and the "fictive of us all", Balzac. After the 1890s, James's reviews increasingly rejoice, as Professor Daugherty comments, in "the diversity of art produced by 'innumerable natures'".

The problem, for the writer on James's criticism, is in finding an overall structure which will comprehend such diversity. Daugherty groups her discussion chronologically and largely manages to avoid distorting the material in order to reveal a pattern. A third of the book, or more, is taken up with "Romanesque": Sand, Rostand, Daudet, du Maurier, Loti, Stevenson, d'Annunzio, and Hawthorne. These are contrasted with Realists, and there is also discussion of "Social Novelists",

For James, too, the greatest "adventure" is character, and getting inside other people is perhaps the quintessential and, in another Jamesian word, "irresponsible" pleasure of the novelist. This is a pleasure which Daugherty illuminates in her chapters on James's relation to Flaubert and his followers, and on his changing attitudes towards Eliot, Turgenev and Tolstoy. An incidental pleasure of the book, revealed in the quotations, is the flexibility, muscular energy and sheer expressiveness of James's own style.

The wavering kind

By Ian Fletcher

NORMAN ALFORD:
The Rhymers' Club
Poets of the Tragic Generation
165pp. Victoria, BC: Cormorant Press. \$16.50.

Is the Rhymers' Club a subject? Or is it not rather a misty, abrupt, pejorative emblem rather like Decadence or *fin de siècle* for a far too late Romanticism? But then the Club was itself rather misty, with a fluid membership and grudging formalities. And no one is quite sure when it began or ended, though, with regard to its beginnings, Karl Beckson argues plausibly for a date round about May 1890. By early 1891 meetings were taking place at the Cheesie Cheese, or in private houses, and these seem to have continued until 1896, while there was some talk about putting out a third anthology after those of 1892 and 1894, to which by no means all the Rhymers and their associates contributed.

We know so little about the Club, indeed, that one might be excused for thinking of it as invented by W. B. Yeats. The sub-title of Norman Alford's book warns us that his examination is hardly likely to challenge the powerful version Yeats put out in *Autobiographies* and elsewhere. Versions is more accurate for Yeats began by suggesting in the *Boston Philo* of 1892 that the Club had a group-reaction to the Parnassian cult of the old French forms practised by Austin Dobson, Andrew Lang et al. A little later, it was Tennyson against whom the Rhymers were reacting and a little later still Yeats was to suggest that Arthur Hallam's essay on Tennyson's early poems provided the manifesto that the Rhymers were unwilling or unable to bandy about. Finally, when Yeats elaborates his notion of "The Tragic Generation", Arthur Symonds, Lionel Johnson and Ernest Dowson go on stage and the rest of the cast are ignored. Yeats sets off

his actors with their "confessional" private sector note and wavering rhythms against the activist and imperialist poets, Henley, Stevenson and Davidson with their optimistic and very positive rhythms.

Yet all such comments seem suspect when one actually faces the texts of the Rhymers' anthologies. There is a hushed tribute to Tennyson, an introit to cycling, a breezy invitation to "hammer the ringing rhyme" that reads like Stevenson at a bad moment and some balladea quite up to the old Board of Trade specification of Dobson, Lang and Co. The truth was that only two of the contributors, Johnson and Dowson, could be adapted by Yeats to his "system" (he was unfortunately still alive, not he was unfortunately dead, as Symonds and his mental and aesthetic collapse).

Other memorialists, De Gaulle, Ernest Rhys, Arthur Lynch, Morley Roberts, are more bitty and just as dubious as historians. If there was any common factor, it would seem to come from the "Tragic Generation", of John Rodden, George Greene, T. W. Rolleston and A. C. Hillier, to which the indigent middle-class Yeats was distinctly hostile. Another common factor was the fashionable Pan-Celtic note of Victor Plarr, Ernest Rhys and Johnson. But then what is one to make of the popularizing De Gaulle or the Fabian and positivist attitudes of Ernest Radford? Certainly Yeats has one point: many of those connected with the Club had a record of madness, or the use of live cartridges, whether against empty royal carriages or the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Norman Alford has chapters on Johnson, Symonds and John Davidson, even though Davidson did not contribute to the Club's anthologies and took a bayonet instructor's view of the Club's morale and physique: they were severely devoid of "blood and guts". Brief biographies of four other Rhymers are provided, but the remaining five are ignored. One chapter is taken up with a discussion of the "Dowson Legend", a legend

in which Dowson (passively) Symonds and Yeats all co-operated. But the "Dowson Legend" was only a dummy run for the legend of "The Tragic Generation", and no attempt is made to demythologize that.

Mr Alford is not the man for it. The specialist will learn little from his offering: the general reader will be now and then misled. Much of the book reheats old criticism and hanks of contemporary reviews of the two anthologies. Manuscript material, the O.C.R. Greene and Dugdale collections, for example, is ignored; but even printed sources are not fully consulted; old errors are resolutely repeated and new ones cheerfully added. Wildo did not actually pay for John Gray's *Silverpans*; he offered to underwrite its cost; all that remains of Yeats's

Loops and doublings

By Daniel Karlin

V. A. DE LUCA:
Thomas De Quincey: The Prose of Vision
167pp. University of Toronto Press.
\$15.
0 8020 5480 3

The core of V. A. De Luca's book consists of a series of detailed readings of De Quincey's work. He divides his heterogeneous and variable output into five phases: the first edition of the *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* (1822); the essays and stories of the following fifteen years; the *Supplies of Propriety* (1845); the *English Mail-Coach* (1849); and the final, revised version of the *Confessions* (1856). The introductory and concluding chapters are much less successful than these central ones. Generalization is not Mr De Luca's forte, and he allows himself far less space than he would need to compare De Quincey's work fruitfully

with that of, say, Blake or Coleridge. But his close study of the form and rhetorical procedure of De Quincey's "impassioned prose" is excellent, following the loops and doublings of his bizarre creativity with meticulous yet imaginative precision. The chapter on *The English Mail-Coach* is especially good at combining lucid analysis with suggestive critical speculation.

The book is richly bound, which is a pleasure in these drab days; but careless editing has allowed, among other errors, the first line of *The Prelude* to be cited as "there is a blessing in this gentle breeze", and, comical enough, has given us a letter from De Quincey to Nancy (as opposed to Mary Russell) Milford. Nancy Milford is duly indicated. I hope De Quincey appreciates the joke.

Speckled Bird has been published (including a variorum edition); Manmohan Ghose was not the author of *Primavera*; he was one of four contributors to the volume; there is no mystery about the play by Symonds performed at Grein's Independent Theatre in March 1892. It was *Minister's Coll*. More seriously, Mr Alford seems to have little sense of the dialogue between Symonds and Yeats that lies behind the *Synbolism Movement in Literature and Ideas of Good and Evil*. It might have been useful to place the Rhymers' Club in the context of other groups such as The Cemented Bricks, the New Vagabonds, the Hmfz, Horace and Omar Khayyam Clubs. Only the Set of Odd Volumes is touched on. Mr Alford is satisfactory neither as critic nor as literary historian.

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Aromatic exports

By Patricia Crone

NIGEL GROOM:
Frankincense and Myrrh
A Study of the Arabian Incense Trade
285pp. Longman. £14.95.
0 582 76476 9

Apart from oil, frankincense and myrrh are the only Arabian commodities over to have been exported on a large scale. Everybody has heard of them at least from the Bible; many are aware that they came from south Arabia and were popular in the classical world. But few knew exactly what they were, how they were used, what their economic significance was, or when they went out of fashion. There is of course a literature on these questions already, and frankincense has recently received superb treatment at the hands of W. W. Müller in Pauly-Wissowa's *Realencyclopädie*. But this is the first monograph to appear on

the subject in English, and also the first to consider the trade as much from an Arabian as from a classical point of view.

The book is not quite the systematic treatment of the subject which the subtitle leads one to expect. Formally it covers the south Arabian trade in incense products from the earliest times until the collapse of the Roman market in these commodities, here placed in the fourth century. In fact it can best be described as a series of excursions on problems in and around this trade, loosely held together by a chronological or topographical framework. The most original parts of the book concern the earliest evidence for the existence of the trade, the identity of the Queen of Sheba, the sources of cinnamon and cassia in the ancient world, the botanical classification of the myrrh, frankincense and balsam trees, the harvest cycle, the incense route, and the possible role of climatic change in the decline of the commerce. Chronology apart, the author does not however have much to say about the pre-classical trade, nor

Headstones

There's a peculiar distinction here
From those who on their premises display
The names and designations of their trades
Or wear them buttonholed in their laps.

A small business will sometimes boast
When it was first established; it is rare
Outside the official records to discover
When it ceased to matter what it sold.

And some there are whose final liquidation
Seems to have passed unnoticed, or the labels
On the particular crates became detached
Long before they reached their destination.

William Clarke

In the cause of Calvin

By Menna Prestwich

N. M. SUTHERLAND:
The Huguenot Struggle for Recognition
394pp. Yale University Press. £15.80.
0 300 02328 6

JANINE GARRISON-ESTÈBE:
Protestants du Midi
367pp. Toulouse: Privat.
2 7089 8601 5
L'Homme protestant
254pp. Paris: Hachette.
2 01 003653 0

The history of French Protestantism possesses all the attractions of minority movements and lost causes. The reign of Francis I saw the first conversions and also intermittent persecution, followed by a two-way traffic on the Swiss border over which Protestants escaped and then returned for operational work in the field. The flood-tide of conversion occurred in the mid-century, when Calvin launched his pastors from Geneva in response to requests from scattered communities. In 1559 the network of Calvinist cells was drawn tightly together with the calling of the first national synod which published a Confession of Faith and the Ecclesiastical Discipline. Most of the churches, apart from a notable number in Normandy, were in the west and south forming a crescent with La Rochelle and Lyon at its tips.

It was in the mid-century too that Protestantism encountered fierce persecution and acquired political colouring together with the name Huguenot. Churches often turned for protection to local seigneurs, while at court nobles factions found in religion a cause and a support which reinforced their traditional strengths derived from land and clientage. Three families contested for power. The Guises, who had invested heavily in Church offices and property, led the Catholic party. The Montmorency produced important converts to Protestantism in François d'Andelot and his brother, Caspary de Coligny, Colonel-General of the Infantry and Admiral of France. The Bourbons, princes of the blood, headed the reversionary interest and Louis, Prince of Condé, signalled the marriage of politics and religion when in 1562 at the outbreak of the first civil war he was elected Protector-General of the churches of France.

The death of Henri II in 1559 bequeathed the problem of a regency and precipitated the civil wars of the second half of the century. The Huguenots fought for toleration, liberty of worship and civil rights. In the period up to the massacre of St Bartholomew in 1572 the war was involved confrontation on three levels. The military confrontation resulted in the Huguenots being driven south of the Loire, gaining the edict of Saint-Germain in 1570 four fortified towns. The first denaturation of a new frontier in France between a Catholic North and a Protestant South. Secondly, confrontation at the court developed into a mafia-style feud after the murder of the duke of Guise in 1563, leading to the assassination of Coligny in 1572, the event which triggered off the massacre of St Bartholomew. Thirdly, there was confrontation on the popular level. Violence was endemic, involving rioting and atrocities on the part of both Catholics and Huguenots and reaching a climax in the killing and looting of St Bartholomew.

The big death-roll among the nobles gathered in Paris for the wedding of Henri of Navarre to Marguerite de Valois, together with conversions and emigration in the subsequent panic, led to near-catastrophe for the Huguenots. The recovery of mobile camps from the provinces, and especially from the towns, La Rochelle became the great Huguenot stronghold in the west, while religious resistance in Guyenne and Languedoc led to the organization of what has been called the United Provinces of the South with the twin capitals of Montauban and Nîmes. From these bases and under the leadership of Francis de Montmorency, the Huguenots fought a hard and successful battle of attrition with the Catholic army, and in 1629, with full Catholic and Calvinist

stress towns guarding their southern kingdom.

The history of Huguenotism has many facets, from national politics and the court to regional affiliations and society. N. M. Sutherland has not aimed to write a complete history of the Huguenot movement but has focused on this political story between 1521 and 1598. The various religious edicts form the connecting thread in a narrative concerned with the responses of the Crown to the Protestant minority. Miss Sutherland claims fairly that the edicts have not previously been studied in relation to each other nor to the circumstances which led to their enactment, and she has analysed them in a long and useful appendix. Much of the material and interpretation — three articles are incorporated in the new book — will be familiar from Miss Sutherland's earlier writings, especially *The Massacre of St. Bartholomew and the European Conflict, 1559 — 1572*, published in 1973. Her argument that the religious wars were less a struggle between the Crown and the Huguenots than between the Crown and the Catholic extremists is neither new nor especially controversial. But even so Miss Sutherland's sympathy for the Huguenots and dislike for the Guises leads her to gloss over the political intrigues and the military threats presented in the 1560s by Condé, scathingly described by Calvin as debauched by ambition. Her view that the vendetta practised by the Guises added a new violence to court politics is convincing, but her claim that there was a conscious plan to eliminate leading Huguenots lacks definitive proof, since so much of the evidence rests on gossip and innuendo. Miss Sutherland styles the death of Condé at the battle of Jarnac, murder, which is a matter of opinion. She concedes that François d'Andelot may have died of cancer, but a fever or poison, though there can be no question of the complexity of the Guises in the murder of Coligny. A complicated discussion of the relation between Calvinism and the Conspiracy of Amboise in 1560, when there was a bungled attempt to remove the king from Guise control, involves Miss Sutherland in an attack upon Lueien Romier, the brilliant interpreter of the early years of the Wars of Religion who wrote half a century ago, but ends tamely with the acknowledgment that the problem is bewildering and the evidence inconclusive.

Miss Sutherland's treatment is flat, partly because characterization is not her strong suit, while she draws her portraits narrowly. She explains that the full Huguenot story requires numerous provincial studies and concentrates on the court rather than the country. Secondly, she considers that "the military history of the Huguenot struggle is a study apart", but it is unhelpful to tell that the Peace of Saint-Germain in 1570 "reflected the Huguenot achievement in the bitter and bloody third civil war" without any explanation of how Coligny snatched victory from defeat by his great cavalry sweep into the south. Thirdly, the book lacks a social dimension, and Miss Sutherland, preoccupied with court politics, dispatches the popular violence of St. Bartholomew in a sentence. But Michelot long ago wrote powerfully on crowd violence in the hot August days and looked to the horizons beyond Paris when he observed that "le Saint-Bartholomé n'est pas une journée; c'est une saison".

It is to these horizons that Janine Garrison-Estèbe, professor at the University of Toulouse and a descendant of an old Protestant family of Montauban, has turned. She has approached Protestantism as a social phenomenon, seeking to discover why Calvinism was welcomed by some elements in society and rejected by others, why it took root in some areas and not elsewhere. Her book gives new depth to the history of French Calvinism by her research into what became the Protestant heartland of the South. Her own loyalties to the Midi give infectious enthusiasm to her book, which is written with a panache and historical imagination akin to Michelot and Le

Roy Ladurie. Her short but penetrating study in 1968, *Tocin pour un massacre on la Saison des Saint-Bartholomé*, paid homage to Michelot by its title, while Le Roy Ladurie provided the title for the present book.

In Mme Estèbe's view the laborious scaffolding of the various edicts of pacification was built on sand because of the unpredictable and uncontrollable violence of the Wars of Religion. She sees the wars as a clash of cultures, contending that Calvinism was hated less for its dogma than for the deviant behavioural patterns which it imposed. Calvinism took the magic nut of religion, and the conservatives, enforcing moral discipline, erected little Genevas, disruptive of the old communities. Huguenots opted out when they shunned traditional carnivals, fêtes, feast-days and taverns, while the denunciation of dancing as lascivious struck at an important feature of local life. Moreover, Huguenots advertised their separate entity by their sobriety and grave demeanour. Mme Estèbe estimates their number in 1559 as roughly a million, one-fiftieth of the population. Calvinism was essentially a religion of towns and élites, its converts being drawn from lawyers, nobles, craftsmen and nobles. Indeed the composition of Protestantism was in inverse proportion to the general pattern of French society in which peasants predominated.

Mme Estèbe has exploited a very rich vein in consistory records to establish not only from which strata in society Huguenots were drawn, but also to penetrate the social background of the elders and ministers and to follow the functioning of Calvinism at the local level. Statistics of 300 elders in thirteen localities over forty years show a preponderance of lawyers and an overlap between elders and town functionaries. The stress on reading the Bible put a premium on literacy and indeed on French in a region where Occitan was the popular spoken language. The interlocking of the consistory with local institutions strengthened Huguenotism, but narrowed its popular base, because re-election and co-optation, as in municipal elections, led to oligarchy and came to check the momentum of the movement.

But after St Bartholomew it was the

towns which organized resistance. Commando raids from Montauban secured control of the Cévennes, while guerrilla units, always officered by nobles, had civilian advisers attached. A Huguenot confederation was established in 1573 and the South was put on a war footing. The basic unit was the town and town officials collected the confiscated royal taxes, while at the regional level there were assemblies of nobles and notables on the pattern of the provincial estates. Novelty lay with the appointment of a Protector at the federal level. There were inevitably tensions between nobles and notables, and Henri of Navarre, the so-called king of Gascony, found that the office of Protector more resembled that of the First Magistrate of a republic than that of an absolute monarch.

Protestants du Midi is a solid, searching and exciting book, backed by statistics and lightened by humour. Elders sniffing out moral lapses, notably dancing, showed the keenness of detectives, while 21 per cent of the regulations of provincial synods was concerned with feminine frivolity in hair-styles and neck-lines. It is reassuring to learn that the women of Nîmes were obstinate and to find the aristocratic Madame Duplessis-Mornay refusing to change her fashionable piled-up hair at the behest of the bourgeois consistory of Montauban and taking refuge in the argument that she had to obey her husband in accordance with the Scriptures. Huguenot ministers are vividly portrayed in a chapter which shows them often at odds with their flocks, not least over stipends. Indeed, Calvinism was an expensive religion, since consistory had to meet military demands, construction costs of temples and salaries, besides subsidizing poor relief. War gave birth to the United Provinces of the South but also stunted their progress. The economy suffered from the prolonged guerrilla warfare, while the diversion of funds from colleges and schools accounts for the mediocrity of the pastors at the beginning of the seventeenth century and adversely affected the new generation of Huguenots.

In her introduction to *Protestants du Midi* Mme Estèbe considers Calvinism in France as practically doomed to failure from the beginning, but nevertheless

in her introduction to *Protestants du Midi* Mme Estèbe considers Calvinism in France as practically doomed to failure from the beginning, but nevertheless

Ideology in crisis

By P. N. Brooks

BERNARD M. G. REARDON:
Religious Thought in the Reformation
349pp. Longman. £11. (paperback, £5.95)
0 582 49030 8

The so-called "post-Christian era" of Arnold Toynbee is arguably one which despises dogma in all its manifestations — political and legal, economic and social, as well as religious. Decidedly damned, the doctrine thus deemed by many to be entirely inappropriate for students and yet another book on the Reformation as altogether irrelevant to contemporary education. Bernard Reardon would agree with the argument so far; at the start of his *Religious Thought in the Reformation* he declares it to be "no exaggeration to assert that the central doctrine of historic Protestantism . . . not to mention those which the reformers received from antiquity through their Catholic inheritance . . . are now almost unintelligible". But in a lively introduction he nevertheless declares that, granted "the aid of an extended historical commentary", the period remains as fruitful as ever, particularly because of the developing nature of its ideology.

From a scholar who has made his name in other periods — notably examining religious thought in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries — one might expect the usual plous inappropration of the Reforma-

tion; but in these pages Dr Reardon shows all the zeal of the convert who has found a fascination in its study. This is a well-balanced work. As overall context the opening chapter on "Anticipations of reform" is thus both appropriate and for once well handled. Reardon skillfully avoiding dreary analyses of long-discredited "causes". If anti-clericalism inevitably gains mention, late-medieval piety is by no means ignored but rather evaluated in a way which clearly demonstrates the prevailing religious climate on the eve of the Reformation to be far removed from the indifference many have urged.

In a compressed work of this kind, narrative is as important as analysis, and Reardon shows himself to be a master of the technique of providing information *à la carte* while at the same time advancing the argument. It is accuracy and not pedantry which insists on Gouda, not Rotterdam, as the birthplace of Erasmus; and a proper respect for a fine tradition of English Reformation historiography which prefers "Edwardine" (p. 269) to Edwardian, whose connotations are all too far removed from Cranmer's *Book of Common Prayer*.

To suggest that there is anything novel in Reardon's book would be to patronize the author and, no doubt, confuse his publisher. For *Religious Thought in the Reformation* is not that kind of book. Those like the Athenians whom St Paul once found obsessed with their search for "some new thing" must continue their regular scrutiny of journals such as *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*, or keep pace with the ever mounting

less 1980 also saw her publishing *L'Homme protestant*, a book designed for a wider audience. This traces the vicissitudes of the Protestant minority, which now comprises only 1.4 per cent of the population, and analyses what Protestantism has stood for and its contribution to French life. There was a long period of attrition in the earlier half of the seventeenth century, followed by active persecution under Louis XIV and the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. There was mass emigration, while outlawed Protestantism inside France colored its heroic phase, with pastors sent to the galleys and desperate resistance by the Camisards. In the eighteenth century outward conformity often camouflaged attendance at the assemblies in the grottoes of the Cévennes until in 1787 Protestants were reintegrated into society by the Edict of Toleration.

French Calvinism has not remained monolithic. During the Enlightenment theological certainties were watered down by ethical rationalism and in the nineteenth century Calvinism was recharged by emotional Evangelicalism. Protestantism has retained its connections with the Midi, while Mme Estèbe also detects some constant features. She regards Calvinism as never being a microcosm of society but always élite and always associated with the bourgeoisie. Her word "bourgeois" embraces a wide spectrum, ranging from the small peasant proprietors of the Gard to the bankers of the Haute Société Protestante of the Third Republic. Protestants have always upheld moral values and have emphasized the importance of the family and the authority of the father within it. They have never wavered in their attachment to education and were in the forefront of the campaign in the nineteenth century for secular, adult and primary education. During the Third Republic in the period before 1914 they were particularly influential at government level both in politics and banking. *L'Homme protestant* is sometimes polemical and overblown, but it has lively stories of Huguenots who resisted and Huguenots who conformed, telling excerpts from Camisard hymns and highly enjoyable examples of the pious language of Protestantism, the "pois de Canaan".

Behaving plastically

By David Papineau

ALEXANDER ROSENBERG:
Sociology and the Preemption of Social Science
227pp. Oxford: Blackwell. £9.90.
0 631 12625 2

One does not need that long memory to get a feeling of *déjà vu* about the "new sociology". After all, it is scarcely a decade since what seem to be essentially the same issues were thoroughly and publicly debated in response to the innumerable attempts of popularizers like Morris and Ardrey to draw lessons about human behaviour from stories about pair bonding in birds and territorial aggression in baboons.

Nor would this feeling of familiarity be entirely misplaced. What is new in the "new synthesis", as E. O. Wilson calls it, is more a matter of sophistication than substance. The popularizers of the 1960s, and indeed some of their more serious ethnological mentors, tended in a vague way to assume that innate patterns of social behaviour evolve because they are good for the group or species. Later, however — surprisingly lately, given that the basic work was done by Fisher and Haldane in the 1930s — ethologists have assimilated the essential principles of population genetics, and recognized that natural selection is extremely unlikely to favour behaviour that benefits the group but disadvantages the individual.

The distinctive feature of recent sociobiology has been the development of ever more ingenious alternatives to group selection in the accounts given of animal division of labour, communication, dominance hierarchies, and so forth. Much favoured have been explanations in terms of kin selection, and ideas from game theory and ecological

economics have also been pressed into plausible service. These are elegant theoretical devices, and have undoubtedly seen an advance on naive group selectionism. But, interested outsiders will still want to ask, do they help sociology to say anything about humans?

The objection here has always been that while evolutionary explanation covers only what is fixed by the genes, human behaviour is highly plastic. Very rarely do our genes alone determine that a given stimulus will produce a given bodily movement. Perhaps this holds for movements immediately involved in the "four Fs" — the basic biological imperatives of feeding, fighting, fleeing, and sexual intercourse. But in general our movements derive from our previous contact with our environments as well as from our genes.

Contemporary sociobiologists have been understandably cagey about the human case. But it is certainly this question of possible human implications that most exercises their critics. And on this question those critics can with reason complain that the increased sophistication of recent evolutionary explanations provides no new answers. It is not as if the main objection to Morris and Ardrey was the relatively subtle point about group selection. Rather, it was simply the implausibility of biological determinism. And implausible biological determinism remains. An improved abstract understanding of how evolution works gives no new reason at all for thinking that human behaviour is in fact fixed by evolution.

If anything in the new sociobiology accounts for the recent revival of interest in it, I suspect, this *fun* of the explanatory stories it comes up with. Kin selection requires calculations on such matters as how much less an aunt's life is worth, evolutionarily speaking, than a sister's. And the

game-theoretic analyses hinge on the relative chances of "hawks" and "doves", "gudgers" and "chents", in "philanderers" and "faithfuls", in the game of life.

Alexander Rosenberg's book is written mainly for philosophers, and is not particularly fun. It does however, offer a serious argument as to why Darwin's theory is, despite appearances, the way to explain human behaviour. It goes like this. Conventional social science is committed to explaining what people do by attributing beliefs and desires to them. Notoriously, however, it has failed to come up with any serious scientific generalizations. The normal account of this failure, that social reality is too complex, is not convincing. The real reason is that beliefs and desires are not explanatory *natural kinds*. Although people do have beliefs and desires, and these do cause their behaviour, it is not in virtue of their properties as beliefs and desires that they do so. To get to properties that do fit into serious generalizations, we need to stop viewing humans statistically and start seeing them biologically as products of natural selection.

Philosophers will recognize what is going on here: E. O. Wilson meets Donald Davidson. Though Rosenberg refers to Davidson only in passing, and puts a number of points differently, the basis of his position is clearly Davidson's influential "anomalous monism", which has it that mental states are materially real but scientifically intractable.

No doubt this heavyweight support for their programme will be welcome to sociobiologists. Whether they, or the Davidsonians, will really benefit from the acquaintance is less clear. The problem is still the plasticity of human behaviour. Not that Rosenberg holds all human behaviour to be biologically determined. His position is simply that insofar as

it is not so determined it is not scientifically explainable. The normal model of learning from the environment, in terms of the acquisition of beliefs, is an scientific good because of anomalous monism. Nor, according to Rosenberg, should alternative models such as nperant conditioning be expected to do any better.

What Rosenberg does not seem to realize, however, is that this scepticism about theories of learning threatens to undermine the revolutionary explanation of many traits that are genetically fixed. For often such traits are of no advantage in themselves, but only because they make it possible to acquire useful habits of behaviour in the course of experience. Examples would be the complex structure of our hands, or the close-focusing ability of our eyes. Or again, more fundamentally, the hard wiring of our brains, including anything that might count as "innate desires". These things are adaptive precisely because of what they enable us to learn. But if learning is not scientifically explainable then it seems, implausibly, to follow that neither are these traits. The moral,

surely, is that evolution is not so much an alternative to learning theory but complementary to it.

There is another, deeper, level at which evolutionary theory and psychological explanation are likely to stand or fall together. Everyday psychology sees actions as mentally selected because their envisaged effects are desirable. Evolution sees biological traits as naturally selected because their past effects have increased fitness. It would be surprising if these two modes of explanation did not "cut the world up" in the same way. So if psychology is scientifically suspect one might expect evolution to be in trouble too. And indeed Rosenberg is not at all convincing on why the arguments against beliefs and desires don't go through against notions of fitness of genes as well. Perhaps Darwinian evolution really does deserve to go down with psychology. But this would mean abandoning an awful lot of apparently reasonable theory. In many ways it seems more plausible to resist Davidsonian fashion and keep evolution afloat by allowing the possibility of a scientific psychology.

Effectively free

By Stephen Clark

HUGO MEYNNEL:
Freud, Marx and Morals
209pp. Macmillan. £18.
0 353 29521 8

Hugo Meynell argues that we cannot rationally accept any theory that excludes the possibility of our relying upon rational thought as a way of reaching the true and the good. "Effective freedom", a condition of being "attentive, intelligent and reasonable in judging what is to be done, and capable of acting accordingly" is not merely possible (it being self-defeating to deny this) but desirable. Stories, religions, moral codes are good in so far as they promote such effective freedom and its concomitant satisfactions. Some moral judgments are so nearly tautologous that anyone who seriously doubted or denied them "would be not so much ignorant as inhuman or insane", among them: the thesis that one ought on the whole to act so as to promote people's happiness. Dr Meynell attempts to evade the charge that statements about value can never be both informative and tautologous by constructing a notion of "loose entailment": one statement loosely entails a set of others when to affirm the first and deny all the others would be "either to contradict oneself or to talk so eccentrically as to be unintelligible". So to say that an act was good though it promotes no-one's happiness, is intuitively approved by no-one, makes no contribution to man's evolutionary progress and is against the revealed will of God is to talk nonsense.

With this meta-ethical position Meynell turns to consider the theories of human nature proposed by R. D. Laing, Konrad Lorenz, Marx, Freud and Jung. He seeks to elicit from these sources such help as they can give to discovering the needs and limitations of humankind, preferring the "weaker" versions of their doctrines to the self-defeating stronger: class, heredity and childhood experience may influence our reasonings; but cannot solely determine them. A classless intelligentsia, dedicated to the pursuit of truth, is possible, although its members will have to take special care not to let the interests and fancies of their own class (the class of classless intellectuals) corrupt their thought.

Meynell is in general fair to his chosen thinkers, perhaps too generous in recounting, for example, the extraordinary view of women purveyed by Freud ("weaker in their social instincts", with less sense of justice than men) without any explicit criticism. The weakest chapter is probably that on Lorenz. Meynell

fails to ask himself exactly what "aggression" is in biological packages: not the intention to hurt or destroy an opponent but any form of behaviour that results in a distancing of the creatures concerned. It is displayed as much in showing-off and growls as in open fights. Lorenz's suggestion, that human beings are ill-equipped with the inhibitions that (mostly) prevent well-armed creatures from damaging each other, is hardly convincing. Even naked human beings are capable of killing each other, but do not do so much more often than do other animals — we are both more dangerous and more pacific than Lorenz supposed. Our wars are not well explained by a failure of individuals' inhibitions, as if they were simple squabbles on a large scale. Meynell also accepts the now-outmoded claim that species-survival is what counts in evolution. Unfortunately, natural selection does not mean spread a trait through a population; it does not guarantee that the trait is good for the species. In past ages creatures with territorial ambitions and a domineering manner have perhaps had more offspring than gentler types: the group, the species might survive better if it were composed of pacifists.

A major criticism of Meynell's ethical doctrine is that it is openly anthropocentric. Occasionally it occurs to him to mention other sentient and rational beings, but to maintain thrust of his argument is to maintain that those who do not see human happiness as of crucial importance are in logical error. It does not seem to me unintelligible to wonder whether, all things considered, it might be better for humankind to join the list of extinct mammals. It is not even unintelligible to wonder whether existence itself, any existence, is a gigantic mistake. I would certainly lay more stress than Meynell on the stability of the ecosystem and the well-being of our fellow-creatures as things demanding our regard. Like him, I do not think these matters are beyond the reach of reason, but the possibility of such extreme disagreement shows that moral truths are not logical truths: the postulates of practical reason are not simply axioms of logic (which was part of G. E. Moore's point).

Despite these failings, and despite some inaccurate accounts of Aristotle's arguments, Meynell's book is a welcome contribution to naturalistic meta-ethics. Moralists need to consider what modern theories of human nature can contribute to their craft, and philosophers need to get away from the sterile dogma that "facts do not determine values": no more they do, in any logical sense, but there are still theories of morality and of epistemology which can only be denied at the price of total incoherence or moral insanity.

The tree's eye-view

By Jonathan Harrison

J. E. TILES:
Things That Happen
113pp. Aberdeen University Press. £5.
0 08 02724 0

The Warden of the Durham Colleges was, when I was a young lecturer, fond of bemusing his hearers with the question "Is the difference between a difference of kind and a difference of degree?"

Anyone considering this question might wonder whether differences and resemblances can differ from or resemble one another, and consider what sort of thing is a difference, as opposed to the things, like chalk and cheese, which differ. A similar question can be asked about a very large number of things: J. E. Tiles has chosen to write about events, though not in the words I shall use. Do they belong to the category of substance (in that sense of "substance" to which it means "thing capable of existing by itself", and not "that which supports accidents", or "that which lies behind appearances", or "that which endures through time") or, as was roughly held by Strawson, whom Tiles takes as his starting point, to a category of thing which is dependent upon substance, in the manner in which collections might be regarded as entirely dependent on the existence of cars and drivers, or games upon the people playing them. There cannot be collections without things, colliding, though the things which collide might not have done so. (There have been philosophers, incidentally, who thought that objects were dependent upon events, for they were just long series of events laid together, end to end in time.)

It seems to me a great misfortune that Tiles does not notice that this

question concerning the dependency of events upon the things to which they happen has been confused by a number of American philosophers, e.g. Davidson, with the question whether they are particulars — what could be more particular than the bottle of Hestings? — and whether it is possible to quantify over them (make generalizations about them) or find criteria for their identity. Obviously one can do all these things. The question of the dependency of events is quite different from the question of whether there are any, as, indeed, there are.

Tiles's main argument for the substantiality of events is "transcendental". Events have to be "substances" for it is necessary for us to treat them as independent entities in order to have a unitary experience of a world of objects in space and time. In treating of this problem Tiles introduces the most imaginative part of his monograph, the idea of a community of stationary observers (whom he calls "trees", rather unfortunately, for it involves him in asking such questions as whether the "fields" are "saturated" whose knowledge of the world is one step on from the knowledge of London possessed by a traveller who can find his way about it only by tube. These trees would need to have a concept of independent events, for they would need this to follow the movements (which are events) of "Places" which passed through the field of view of adjacent trees, and know how parts of these movements were connected with the movements as a whole. (Does Tiles think that only "substances" have parts? Does he think that places are substances — although their substantiality has been done so. (There have been philosophers, incidentally, who thought that objects were dependent upon events, for they were just long series of events laid together, end to end in time.)

It is not entirely clear just what Tiles's argument is. How far would the fact that "trees", who cannot move about, need an independent concept of events, show that we, who can move about, also need one? And

Tiles's treatment of the subject, like Kant's of a similar problem in the Second Analogy, seems to be undermined by his failure to appreciate the fact that movement is relative. If an object is moving in relation to us, then we are moving in a complementary manner in relation to it. Why should it make such a crucial difference that we, but not it, are stationary in relation to the earth and in Tiles's case, other "trees"? Kant, and perhaps also Tiles, instead of distinguishing between "objective" and "subjective" successions, should really have distinguished between successions which represent an object which is not moving in relation to the earth (a house) and one which is (a ship moving downstream). The observer can be moving or stationary in relation to either.

Tiles's book is careful, thorough, fairly original, and manifests a good grounding in subjects which, like logic and philosophy of mathematics, are becoming increasingly necessary as a tool for the philosopher. Unfortunately it is not well written; his English sentences are often uncouth and poorly punctuated. His exposition is difficult to follow, and lacks force, flair, clarity and wit. His book will be of interest to only a small number of specialists. But there is a great deal of good argument in it, if you are prepared to work to find it, and I have modified pleasure — for there are too many of them — in welcoming the Scottish series whose first member it is.

A second edition of *Space and Time* by Richard Swinburne has just been published by Macmillan (208pp. £15. 0 353 29072 0). In dealing with the concepts and the scientific properties of Space and Time, this edition has taken into account advances made in astronomy, physics, cosmology and particle physics since the book was first published in 1968. It also draws on recent philosophical work on the subject.

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How to cook humble pie

By Yakov Malkiel

BARBARA REYNOLDS (General Editor):
The Cambridge Italian Dictionary
Volume 2, English-Italian
843pp. Cambridge University Press. £85.
0 521 08708 2

The word *glossaire*, etymologists report in unison, comes from *grammaire*, a derivation which becomes more plausible once one recalls the meaning of "insight" that for a while attached to the latter. But in lexicography, the theory and practice of dictionary-making, ever be persuasively classed as an art, or even associated with the realm of the arts? The matter is principally not one of definitions, which after all can be juggled, but rather of persistent connotations. The layman readily sees the actual monofacturing of a dictionary as involving a good deal of tedious, long-drawn-out drudgery; and the finished book is invariably ranked as a reference work, from which one expects a high degree of accuracy, a wealth of information, as well as matter-of-factness and judiciousness – but hardly ever a spark of inspiration.

This is doubly true of bi- or plurilingual dictionaries which, unlike some of their authoritative monolingual counterparts, are not known for having moulded taste or channelled their users' thinking into certain predetermined grooves. Characteristically, Sponiards of the Age of Discoveries, including numerous missionaries, used to apply the label *arte* to the description of grammatical structure, but never to an inventory of words, either in regard to their own language or to an indigenous one. Nevertheless, artistic minds have, at rare intervals, busied themselves with the unworldly production of a dictionary; and Barbara Reynolds, at long last, completed. Cambridge Italian Dictionary is a case in point.

Dr Reynolds's rise to fame and, above all, to a high plateau of originality was slow. The start was propitious enough: for her University of London PhD thesis (1948) she chose a strategic topic which seemed henceforth to open the door to sophisticated literary and philological research, namely the analysis of a hitherto unpublished version of Alessandro Manzoni's unfinished treatise on the Italian language. The real point at issue, however, was not the merit of this particular text (provisionally titled, unexcitingly enough, *Della lingua italiana*), but the fact that the subject she had selected forced her to become immersed in the entire oeuvre of the author of *I Promessi Sposi*, an oeuvre of, overtly, pivotal importance for the opening decades of nineteenth-century Italian literature, but also one of crucial relevance for the determination of the role of Tuscan (specifically, of Florentine) vis-a-vis standard literary Italian.

Dr Reynolds's thesis was regarded as sufficiently meritorious for its speedy transformation into a book (1950), and, coincidentally, she was appointed lecturer in Italian at Cambridge – a university known for its special commitment to the domain of Italian culture. Meanwhile, she was also practising her art as a verse translator and the same year (1950) saw the appearance of Volume One of her Penguin version of Dante's *Comedy* – a venture successfully concluded in the early 1960s.

In 1962 Volume One of the *Cambridge Italian Dictionary* appeared, comprising only the Italian-English part. It has taken compiler, collaborators, printer, and publisher fully eighteen years to complete and distribute the companion English-Italian edition, the fulfilment of an earlier pledge which has made the entire venture not only bilingual, but also – importantly – bidirectional. However, a few years ago, in 1975, a sort of pilot or satellite project saw the light of day: Dr Reynolds's *Concise Cambridge Italian Dictionary*, running for all its modesty to nearly 800 pages.

Since the present dictionary carries with it no editorial message and aims at entering its users on all sorts of particular without, however, trying to influence their mode of thinking, one

may ask just what the "ort" presiding over this sort of lexicography can possibly consist in, or amount to. The first task of the lexicographer involves the ruthless elimination of ghost words and other superfluities, since even a very comprehensive dictionary (and Dr Reynolds's qualifies as that) must not be confused with a collection of lexical curios. I know from first-hand experience – so far confined to a consultation of Volume One – that Dr Reynolds has done a good deal of pruning. Thus, for my own inquiries into selected problems of suffixal derivation in Italian I compiled preliminary lists of seemingly relevant formations – extracted from miscellaneous, incoherent, and, alas, only to discover, upon checking these lists against Dr Reynolds's material (in search of the best possible glosses), that some five per cent of the items had been excluded from the *Cambridge Italian Dictionary*, no doubt on account of their dubious or, at least, marginal status. So much for housecleaning.

Then there is the other extreme – also an avoidable hazard – of overstuffing a mid or late twentieth-century dictionary with all sorts of highly technical terms (for the most part international in scope, and traceable to Greek or Latin roots), in tribute, as it were, to our scientific era. An extreme instance of this exaggeration is the overblown etymological dictionary, in five thick volumes, by Battisti and G. Alessio (even if one makes allowances for the major differences between the demands of an etymological and those of a bilingual dictionary), which made its appearance shortly after World War Two. To cite a concrete example: the misjudged term of Italian lexicographers cited as 115 formations in *oe*, "air", being more economical, Dr Reynolds has been satisfied with adding forty-five such formations on the Italian side – those least abstruse from the layman's point of view. But this is not all: the respective arrangements of the items offer a more eloquent testimony to her superior method than the bare figures. In the *Dizionario etimologico italiano* one is given a single file of entries, as it were, arrayed in straight alphabetical order. Dr Reynolds operates, wherever possible, not with individual entries, but with space-saving consolidated blocks, sometimes offering her readers, in the process, paragraphs of considerable length. Thus the mostly technological terms stretching from *nerfiero* to *aerostato* in her dictionary occupy a single block of eighteen lines. What characterizes the clarity or so formations thus bracketed is that the user of the dictionary, for once, is apt to pay scant attention to the translation, i.e. to the actual *raison d'être* of the entire undertaking. One does not

learn much that is vitally new semantically on reading that *nerfiero* and *aerostato* correspond to *nerfiero* and *aerostato*, respectively. The reader in need of further guidance as regards the meanings and applications to real-life contexts involved will simply have to consult either a monolingual dictionary in his own language, or an encyclopedia, or a specialized vocabulary: industrial, engineering, commercial, and the like.

Nevertheless, the reduced volume of information conveyed even in these seemingly frustrating cases involves no blind alleys or redundancy. For *nerfiero* and *aerostato* the Anglophone will discover the correct word-stress, discreetly suggested by a raised dot following the accented vowel. He will also detect a number of dependable grammatical clues: the gender of every Italian noun is marked – *ni* or *ni* (at the risk of redundancy, since in most instances the word-ending suffices to disclose the gender); for *cervobis* "passenger plane", a somewhat puzzling compound, there is a hint as to how to form the plural; and for *nerofoglio* "aerologist", help is offered on the correct spelling of the plural; and so on. Only in exceptional cases will the reader encounter, set off by parentheses, the actual explanation, or paraphrase in plain language, of an erudite or exotic-sounding component, as when Italian *nerofoglio* in addition to being crisply rendered by *aerophor* and assigned to the realm of music by means of an abbreviation, is further said to stand for "a device for assisting breathing of wind instrument players". Where slang expressions are involved, as seems to be true of *cervobis* used as a substitute for *corbinello*, a cross-reference is supplied.

In Volume Two the consolidation of short, technologically-flavoured entries into major blocks has been practised far more sparingly – possibly Dr Reynolds is here reacting to mild complaints about excessive compactness in the earlier volume. A more important (and distinctly more prescriptive) reason, however, may very well have been her far greater indulgence in this volume in crucial phraseological detail, the result may be, of greater experience and of her superior command of elusive nuances in her native English. Thus not only does she list fully three (undifferentiated) Italian equivalents of *aeroplano*, but she provides, within the same paragraph, the Italian counterparts of such phrases, set off in *italics*, as *commercial*, *fighter*, *hedge-hopping*, *high-wing*, *land*, *long-range*, *low flying*, *low-wing*, and *mid-wing* (*terraplane*).

Here, incidentally, we come upon one idiosyncrasy of Dr Reynolds's which will not be unanimously ap-

plauded: her failure to encompass, and to distinguish between, the two major territorial varieties of English. *Aeroplano* is tonally alien to American English usage, written or oral, formal or informal. The New World form *airplane* (thus spelt in the standard-setting, if slightly controversial, Webster's *Third New International Dictionary* of 1961) is hard to detect in the *Cambridge Italian Dictionary*, because its spelling has been slightly Briticized through the introduction of a hyphen, a decision which, in turn, has forced the compiler, for consistency's sake, to grant it an inconspicuous half-line in the enormously long single-paragraph entry *ni*. To make things worse, there is no hint here, or in comparable instances, exactly where *nitplane* is currently preferred to *neoplano*. As if this were not sufficient, one finds, midway through Volume Two, the entry *hydro-airplane*, from which the curious, linguistically sensitive reader gathers that the reputed Americanism *airplane*, previously treated like a step-child, has nevertheless gained a firm toehold in accepted British usage when entering into a compound!

Thus Dr Reynolds's dictionary, an entirely reliable tool for speakers of English and Italian where British usage is involved or aimed at, must be used with marked caution in North America (where Canada and the US seldom part company) and in Italy as well, in contexts where the target is American. This is not a stricture, but an unavoidable qualification, which also applies, as I have recently tried to show elsewhere, to Anna Laura and Giulio Lepeschy's otherwise highly stimulating *The Italian Language Today*.

Given the crushing weight of the task of compiling, from freshly-tapped sources, a truly up-to-date bidirectional dictionary, there has been a tendency among publishers to assign each part to a different expert, with varying degrees of coordination. The classic example is the famous Leipzig firm Teubner's decision, reached between the wars, to entrust J. Slaby with a Spanish-German and R. Grossmann with a corresponding German-Spanish dictionary project. The – presumably unexpected – result was a shocking measure of unevenness: Grossmann produced a masterpiece, fully comparable to Dr Reynolds's in tidiness, the felicity, and authenticity, while Slaby turned in an, at most, competently executed job. Also, Grossmann's volume, far from comprising, roughly, one half of the world, turned out to be almost twice the size of Slaby's – not least because, having been brought up in a German-speaking home of the La Plata area, he was more sensitive than his co-lexicographer to New World nuances. In the case of Dr Reynolds's work, such unevenness has been

avoided – the volumes are approximately of the same size, though not entirely homogeneous in their presentation. The second volume has been made more pleasing to use through, for example, a liberal use of *italics* for set phrases and favoured collocations.

The two skills displayed to best advantage by Dr Reynolds and her assistants are, first, the recognition of certain phrasal groups, not exactly being sufficiently congealed to warrant separate listing – simply because any consecutive literal translation of each link or component of such a sequence may sound unidiomatic, and sometimes not even readily understandable, to the ears of a foreigner; and, second, a magnificent command of the English language, which makes for a nicely orchestrated score. Occasionally, the two advantages go hand in hand: thus, no profound knowledge of "philology" is required to recognize the close kinship of English *humble* to Italian *umile*, and they have indeed remained in state of near-synonymy, so that the phrase *in my humble opinion* neatly matches *secondo il mio umile parere*, and of *humble origin* echoes *di umili origini* (except for the emphasis on the plural in Italian). But, less fortunately, *he comes from a humble family* is rendered by *è di famiglia modesta*, while *a humble cottage* is translated more forcefully by *una capanna modesta*. Where genuine humiliation – sensed as a painful punishment inflicted on a given victim – is involved, the speaker of Italian prefers the suggestive lexical family of *basso*, literally "low", to either *umile* or *modesto*; hence to be *humbled* "abbassare la cresta", "andare a obassarsi", and the like. All this is to say nothing of an entirely different rendition of the noun (*humbles* "interiora del cervo", as used in the jargon of hunting, with further consequences for the difficult transfer into Italian of the set phrase *to eat humble pie*. Dr Reynolds succeeds, in a nine-line entry (*humble*), not only in delimiting the families of *umile*, *modesto*, and *basso*, but in informing her English readers of the grammatical behaviour of Italian *interiore*; and her Italian readers of the erstwhile wavering, in English, between *humbles* and *umblers*; she even uses in a miniature history, couched in pithy Italian, of the real-life medieval background of the phrase *to eat pie*. Undersubtlety, she lists neither *under ear*, nor *under crown*, the phrase *to eat crow* "to accept what one has fought against", presumably because an Americanist – albeit a very colourful one – is involved.

To sum up: the two volumes of Barbara Reynolds's dictionary together constitute a lexicographical masterpiece.

Single handed, Petar Rainier has just crossed the South Atlantic in his yacht *Abstrus* with his revolutionary Venetian rig. Now Finnish millionaire Axel Thomsen asks him to skipper *Jetwind*, a fully automated, computer controlled square-rigger and sail her to record time from the Falkland Islands to Cape Town. What with beautiful sailmakers, sudden death, Argentinian nationalists, mammoth icebergs and the Soviet navy – not to mention high winds and rough seas – Rainier has a pretty hairy time. Sailing and sea are well done – though more detail of the revolutionary rig would have been appreciated. But the successive peripetias demand a little too much from the reader.

As Britain prepares to renew diplomatic relations with Russia now no longer a monarchy, but a People's Socialist Republic and member of the Warsaw pact – English diplomat Oliver Mandrake is sent into the country on a secret mission. Amusing sand-up of the political thriller, which also casts a few stones in the direction of the Foreign Office, diplomatic life, and tourism behind the Iron Curtain.

GEOFFREY JENKINS:
A Rivel of Waters
252pp. Collins. £6.95.
0 00 221681 3

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DAVID NEMEC:
Bright Lights, Dark Rooms
322pp. Severn House. £6.50.
0 7278 0703 X

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One personal protest: if Susan Bassnett-McGuire, really, considers that Frank Copley's colloquial American version of Catullus's "Poem 13" is "a kind of Damon Runyonesque dialect", she has a lot to learn about the phenomenal mastery of the vernacular.

Seamus Squire, who has been looking after security on Britain's latest nuclear submarine, is interrupted on his Scottish holiday by sinister strangers with guns. Good action and some really superlative flying scenes largely conceal the gaps and rough edges in the plot, and the slightly less than plausible characterization. But all in all a sparklingly good debut. Christopher Murphy certainly has the root of the matter in him.

JOHN HAYTHORNE:
The Stridau Itmenslen
137pp. Orion. £5.95.
0 7043 2285 4

As Britain prepares to renew diplomatic relations with Russia now no longer a monarchy, but a People's Socialist Republic and member of the Warsaw pact – English diplomat Oliver Mandrake is sent into the country on a secret mission. Amusing sand-up of the political thriller, which also casts a few stones in the direction of the Foreign Office, diplomatic life, and tourism behind the Iron Curtain.

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Criminal proceedings

By T. J. Binyon

CHRISTOPHER MURPHY:
Scream at Sea
207pp. Secker & Warburg. £5.95.
0 436 29685 3

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piece of work, which marks, too, the progress from Chandler's day in the present in that the crimes are more repulsive and the people more depraved than anyone Markow has to deal with.

JOHN BUXTON HILTON:
Surrender Value
153pp. Collins. £6.25.
0 00 231795 8

Superintendent Kenworthy, now retired, is called in privately by an anxious wife when an elderly school teacher cashes in a life insurance policy and vanishes: he may have crawled into a quiet hole to die; he may have taken off with one of his pupils. Unusual in its approach, but restrained and certainly never less than interesting – with some cutting things to say, too, about contemporary education and its products.

GEORGE C. CHESBRIE:
Shadow of a Broken Man
233pp. Severn House. £6.95.
0 7278 0702 1

Second adventure of dwarf private investigator Mongo Frederickson, former circus acrobat, now Professor of Criminology. He is asked to find out whether famous architect Raftery, supposedly killed when he fell into the smelting furnace at a metallurgical laboratory, is still alive; a question the intelligence services of most countries would also like an answer to. Fast-moving, ingenious and well-written, but once again the basic plot premise is incredible, rather than credible.

DERMOT LOWDEN:
Sunspot
220pp. Macmillan. £5.50.
0 333 19619 8

An English seaside resort at the height of the season, disturbed by a series of murders which the police classify under the heading PURL: Pathological, Unmotivated, Repeater, Local. Very different from Desmond Lowden's other novels, this is no less successful, narrated almost impressionistically, in a succession of short, sharp, bright scenes. The attention switches rapidly from one character to another: from policeman, to suspect, to victim. The reader knows more than the police do, but can never be sure that he knows enough. All in all, an immensely professional and striking piece of work.

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TIM HEALD:
Murder at Moose Jaw
188pp. Hutchinson. £5.50.
0 09 144610 4

Simon Bognor, Tim Heald's bumbling, greedy and obese Board of Trade investigator, goes to Canada to look into the death of millionaire Sir Roderick Farquhar, killed by phosphorous trioxide crystals in his Balaclava bath oil. Plot slightly weaker than in earlier instalments of the Bognor series, and set pieces not quite as hilarious, but still a good example of an extremely difficult genre, the comic crime novel.

STUART KAMINSKY:
Bullet for a Star
188pp. Seven House. £6.95.
0 7278 0701 3

Stuart Kaminsky's second jape set in vintage, 1940s Hollywood, with private investigator Toby Peters hired by Warner Brothers to find out who is trying to blackmail Errol Flynn. A strong supporting cast includes Humphrey Bogart, Peter Lorre and Sidney Greenstreet – about to make *The Maltese Falcon* – and a crowd for should one say (ref?) of other extras. Amusing and undoubtedly readable, though one point niggles: if Peters keeps being employed by these well-heeled characters – at the end of this book he's imperiously summoned by Judy Garland – how come he never has two dimes to rub together himself?

ELLIS PETERS:
Saint Peter's Fair
220pp. Macmillan. £5.50.
0 333 31050 0

Ellis Peters's fourth story about Brother Cadfael of the Benedictine monastery at Shrewsbury is set in 1139. A Bristol merchant is murdered during the course of the summer fair, and this crime followed by others. Perhaps less of a detective novel than previous Peters books, this is more of a novel, with honest hero and charming heroine, while its ramifications extend into the high politics of the day. The whole set, as usual, against a detailed and carefully presented picture of medieval life: the author is gradually building up a complete account of Shrewsbury society in the twelfth century.

J. R. L. ANDERSON:
Death in a High Latitude
221pp. Gollancz. £5.95.
0 575 02995 1

Colonel Peter Blair, still acting as a liaison between the Home Office and Scotland Yard, is asked to look into an imbrolio involving a kidnapped oil company scientist, a missing seventeenth century map, and the theory of the Arctic Circle Syndrome. All of which lead to an adventurous time on Ellesmere Island, in the Canadian Arctic, accompanied by his new wife Ruth, Professor of Mathematics at Oxford. A rousing good story, though the final explanation is perhaps a trifle too long.

JEFFREY ASHFORD:
The Loss of the Cullon
160pp. Collins. £5.75.
0 00 231 482 7

Second Officer Bill Stevens of the tramp steamer *Cullon*, left behind for dead when the ship sinks, is rescued and comes back to England determined to clear his name and uncover the cause of the accident. Pleasantly old-fashioned and straightforward story, with solid hero and engaging heroine.

LESLIE STEPHAN:
Murder or Not
192pp. Robert Hale. £5.95.
0 7091 9051 8

Police at Hampford, Massachusetts, become suspicious that Helen Crocker's death was not a natural one when the sorrowing widow immediately marries the luscious Darlene, thirty years his junior. A slow, leisurely, pleasant stroll through smalltown New England.

John Cressy's *Crime Collection 1981*, the annual anthology of the Crime Writer's Association, will be published by Gollancz on September 3 (188pp. £6.95 0 575 05022 4). Among the contributors are P. D. James, Julian Symonds, Michael Gilbert, H. R. P. Keating and Colin Watson.

Shapely arches

By Paul Taylor

HERYL BAINBRIDGE (Editor):
New Stories 6
208pp. Hutchinson, in association with the Arts Council of Great Britain and PEN. £6.95.
0 09 145230 9

The mystery which hangs over this and similar anthologies of short stories by various hands concerns the type of market at which the publishers are aiming. The interest aroused in the genre by the recent work of Ian McEwan, Neil Jordan and Desmond Hogan indicates that the public's studied upathy towards the short story may be in the process of relaxing to something approaching hemmed tolerance; but it is still difficult to imagine who would go out of their way to get hold of this volume. Aspiring writers trying to gauge the level at which work is considered publishable? Literary agents and professional reviewers? Students of contemporary literature?

The stories are, for the most part, rather woodenly competent. Curiously, the two most moving pieces – Elizabeth Troop's "Comic Cuts" and George Moor's "Mammer Gorse" – also seem to be those most to offend against one of the unwritten laws of the genre: not to pack novel-length material into the short story's compact (and when used properly) liberally constricted form. Troop's beautifully sympathetic tale concerns George, an illustrator of children's comics, and Evie, his triumphantly good-natured wife, whose childless lives are irreversibly altered by the arrival of two young and unsettlingly individualistic evacuees. Troop is both delicate and intelligent about the conflicting pressures of parenthood and foster-parenthood and the liberating effect which the example of youthful, unsexed sexuality can have on the dormant middle-aged. The pace and flow of events would have greatly benefited from a slower, novel-length unfolding: the story leaves one hungry for more circumstantial information about the characters.

What happens is they nearly kill a girl in a blue anorak. Also to be recommended are Dan Jacobson's "The Summer School Project of Jay Edmund Arnold" and Nicholas Brough's "Face to Face", and the collection ends with an informative series of biographical notes about the contributors, which is particularly helpful in indicating where to find their other published work.

Sands of time

By Simon Blow

ROBIN MAUGHAM:
The Deserters
172pp. Simon Kimber. £5.50.
071 83 0198 6

Paul and Ken are stuck in the desert, both survivors of a tank skirmish. Paul is in Rommel's army and Ken is in Montgomery's. Though the enemies are wary of each other at first, gradually a trust develops and with it their life stories unfold. Paul is gay while Ken has served time for the seduction of a fourteen-year-old girl on Wimbledon Common. They are in their early twenties. Paul's one relationship has been with a German actor who picked him up in the Tiergarten in Berlin, and he would like to form a second one now with Ken. Previous intimations show that Ken "could be", but he declines Paul's advances. Yet the intimacy deepens to a point where war and its arbitrariness become absurd in the face of their mutual affection. Sleek of the war, they plan to desert and seek shelter among the Bedouin tribes. But their plot goes awry and we are left to this speculation on the subject of allegiance to country versus allegiance to persons.

Resonance was not a quality that Robin Maugham particularly strove for. His talent was to tell a good story with pace and gusto, and *The Deserters* has an emotional lightness which would have been less apparent had the plot been arrier. But it would seem that in the course of seventeen novels and an autobiography which told all, Maugham had almost exhausted the often limited material of the expatriate writer. Searching for fresh ground, he turned back and foud this delicate matter, used years before as a play. It has suffered in re-use, but nonetheless it has a customary polished technique which will delight the many Robin Maugham admirers – who made him, to the irritation of his uncle, a readable and popular writer who sold well.

The *Deserters* was Robin Maugham's last novel before he died, and it is based on an incident which occurred to him while on active service in the war. Like much of his fiction it is set out of England and preoccupied with the working class